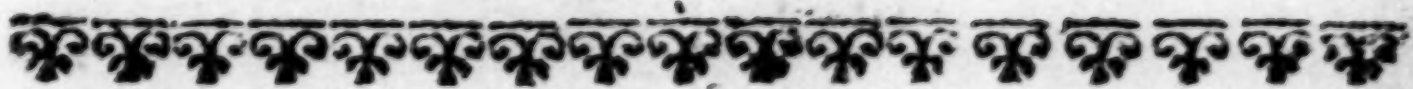


MODERN
CHARACTERS
FROM
REAL LIFE.

In TWO VOLUMES.





May, 1853
R
Modern Characters:

ILLUSTRATED BY

HISTORIES

IN

REAL LIFE,

AND

Address'd to the Polite World.

VOL. I.



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T A B L E
O F
C O N T E N T S
O F T H E
First VOLUME.

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M O D E R N
C H A R A C T E R S.



H I S T O R Y I.



ESBIA, when she first saw London, was barely seventeen; a country education, under a good father, had furnish'd her with all the principles of virtue; establish'd honour as the first of human considerations; and taught her to dread death less than a crime. The injuring the character of another would have appear'd to her in a worse light than

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the

the perjury of a suborn'd evidence ; and to have cheated at cards not less criminal, tho' of less consequence, than to have demanded an equal sum in the streets, or on the road.

When people have less designs upon beauty, they are less extravagant in its praises : when they are not used to the pride of ruining those who possess it, they are not so eager to discover even the brightest force of it. Lesbia, who would have created rapture in a thousand breasts in this intriguing town ; who would, by that time she was thirteen, have been the theme of every song, the toast of every riot ; had not yet been told she was handsome. The son of the principal farmer had sometimes said she was like a picture of Mary queen of Scots, which hung up in the hall ; and her father had observ'd her skin was of the same hue with the celebrated lady Ranelagh, of his time : as neither had been interested neither had been warm, and what is spoke without the earnestness of passion is generally heard with indifference. The lady did not suppose that having a resemblance spoke any claim to the beauties of the person resembled, and remembering

bring that she had read in the Spectator an account of sir Roger de Coverley's face passing for the Saracen's head, with very little alteration; she concluded that it was as possible a plain face might be like to an elegant one, as a good countenance for her partiality for the knight had always painted him on her imagination in very favourable colours, might be so to a terrible and savage one.

Women never think themselves handsome till men tell them they are so. The homeliest will believe it when it comes from people so much interested; the finest will give no credit to their glass while they want this attestation: no creature is so tyrannic, so fickle, so unfeeling, as a beauty; and tis thus we create the engines that destroy us. It was at the last of the Vauxhall breakfasts that Lesbia first shew'd the polite world the most engaging face they had ever seen. The death of her father had thrown her into the care of an aunt, whose residence in town had made that place also her abode; and she had been tempted, by the finest morning the spring had offer'd, to make a visit to the first place in the world where a fine morning is to be en-

joy'd: she who was once the first of the G——s was there, and walk'd unregarded, the circle was form'd about the new invader; wherever she moved the crowd follow'd, and the respect that is paid, thro' constraint, to a princess in a drawing room, was offer'd voluntarily to her: of all the whole circle not one but turn'd his face towards her: not one but kept his distance, tho' not a man but wished to break thro' the limits.

The scene was very new to the persons who were the objects of regard: the aunt was confounded, the girl was terrified; they found themselves banished from the place by the attention that was paid them in it: they made their way out at the first door, and as they drove home, thoroughly discontented with having lost the entertainment of the morning, reasoned very variously on the occasion of the incident. The aunt was fully sensible of the whole matter. The niece had never entertained a thought of herself favourable enough to have given her the least hint towards the discovery; and the old lady had laid the whole force of the enchantment on the beauty of a handkerchief the girl wore, which, however,

C H A R A C T E R S.

5

ever, as it was particular, she told her it would be adviseable to put on no where but in the house for the future.

The coach, tho' those that were in it had not attended to that, was followed by a number of the persons who had been foremost in their admiration; and enquiries were made on every hand to learn who the people were that had occasioned all the consternation. If the men of intrigue were chagrin'd to hear of the prudence, good-sense, and strictness of the guardian, they were charmed to find the ward a perfect country innocent: half a dozen of them watched the door from morning to night; two or three took lodgings in view of the house; some brib'd the maids; and others attempted the trades-people: but all was ineffectual. The old lady, tho' she had no conception of all this preparation, did not suppose the incident would be wholly without its consequences; or even had she not foreseen the continued assiduities of these admirers, she was in no haste to teize the beauty's brain with new ones: she had understood it as little less than a miracle that the girl had been blind to one acci-

dent of so interesting a nature, and she was determined to keep her out of the way of another.

While those who plotted deeper were paying their attention to the door, many who were deeply wounded, tho' either less cunning or less assiduous, were watching all the public places in expectation of her coming, and hoping as much for a chance a second time, as they had missed the first. They were all disappointed. After a week the greatest part gave up the expectation; only the two or three, who were in some measure fixed in the neighbourhood by their lodgings, were in a lingering and dark hope, that accident might, at one time or other, and some way or other, do something. It is not to be suppos'd the church was a place that could have occur'd to the memory of a fine gentleman on any occasion. This became so perfectly unfashionable a place that 'twas not frequented even for an intrigue; two of these were surpris'd as they were at breakfast to see all the people going one way; they recollected, that whatever it was that clear'd every house of its inhabitants, might also have the effect on the enchanted castle where
their

their divinity resided ; they threw on their cloaths ; they followed the crowd ; they found themselves at the place of worship ; they had not been long seated there before the blooming Lesbia followed her aunt up the middle isle, and into one of the most remote pews.

The congregation were alarmed at the appearance of so conspicuous a figure, which they had not seen before. The sacred desk could not protect the person who officiated in it from darts in their nature irresistible. He pronounced the prayers with a confused fervour ; and, while his eyes were continually directed towards the fair incognita, seem'd to address them rather to her than to the deity. People, whose attention had been less engross'd by the same object, could have discovered more of the venerable inamorato's disorder ; the aunt instantly saw the attention that was paid to her fair charge, nor could that lady now be insensible to it herself ; her surprise was more than her satisfaction ; and instead of that erect triumph which would have discovered itself in many women on such an occasion, Lesbia shew'd no sense of it but what gave her pain ; and during the whole re-

mainder of the service never shew'd her face above the top of the pew. People, while they were disappointed, admired the modesty that was the occasion ; and those who burn'd to see her, applauded her more for denying them that satisfaction.

Of the two wounded youths, who had fallen in the way of this lucky opportunity of seeing her, the one was a profess'd man of intrigue, a person of family and fortune, of innate honour and an uncommon understanding ; the other was one of those wild unthinking creatures, who, from their success upon a common creature, think their way open to the most reserv'd, place assurance first in the rank of human virtues, and esteem it incapable of disappointment. Sylvius, the person who claims the first character, laid his schemes with a discretion that by no means suited with the impetuous temper of his friend ; they determin'd on different measures, and the mutual engagement was, that the success of the one should be the end of the attempts of the other. Neither of them had ever harbour'd a thought of matrimony, yet both, such is the cruel vanity of mankind, form'd projects.

CHARACTERS. 9

jects which they thought could not fail of success.

The undaunted adventurer walk'd up to the lady's pew as soon as the service was over; he offer'd his hand to the aunt, and was refus'd with civility; he pursued his assiduities to the outer door with that assurance that scorns repulse, and he there attempted to hand the niece; the disdain that sparkled in her eyes was severer than the most eloquent reproof, and he gave up the chace as hastily as he had begun it.

Sylvius had remained all this time in his place, nor so much as directed a glance towards the destin'd victim to his designs; he knew his importance was enough to support an acquaintance which flattery could not fail to succeed in making; he knew the way was open to the clergyman into every family in the parish. And while he disdain'd the rival, he saw the lover could not fail to make his way into the family: he met the person whose assistance he had determined to engage, tho' without his knowledge, in so honourable an office, as he was coming out of the vestry; he thanked him for

his sermon; he entered into the merits of it, such as they were, with so much judgment, that the preacher was charm'd with his applauses: they accompany'd one another to the lodgings of the clergyman, who could not omit to ask his new friend to come in: Sylvius excused himself on a pretended engagement, but told the person who had asked him, that he should not think he forgave him, if he did not promise to sup with him at his lodgings. The clergyman was charm'd to find his new acquaintance was also his parishioner, and did not fail of his appointment.

Sylvius employ'd the hours between this and supper-time in disposing every thing to make the best appearance in his apartments; he sent home for his plate; he ordered every servant to attend; he gave his instructions for a magnificent supper, and invited a couple of his friends, who were intrusted with the secret, and who were happy to be employ'd in so scandalous a deceit.

The hour approached; the visitant was ushered into the dining-room, and left for above a quarter of an hour to enter-

CHARACTERS. II

entertain himself with admiring the grandeur of the preparation. Sylvius has the address to make every thing familiar ; he entered alone, and his friends dropped in by perfect accident. The conversation was all concerted, yet it seemed to flow from the immediate occasion ; the supper, tho' too much for the family-meal of a man of almost the first quality, seemed the common course of the table ; and the master of the family neither seemed to think it at all particular, or that it needed an apology. The friends who had fallen in by this perfect accident, were often running into the common, but not the less unjustifiable licentiousness of discourse ; but Sylvius always stopped them : ' You know, he would say, this ' is always disagreeable to me, but at ' this time in particular you must be ' guarded.' The clergyman was charm'd with the true politeness of his friend, whom he already began to see in the light of a future patron ; and even when disinterested views had no share in the attention which he paid him, his choice of subjects for conversation was so proper, and his manner of treating him, at once so modest and so masterly, that it

would have been injustice not to applaud, what it were stupidity not to admire.

There never was so compleat a master of dissimulation as Sylvius ; but what pity, that he who could support the assumed character of a man of virtue and wisdom, could not distinguish that it was the only one worthy his attention in reality. As one of the visitors was to pretend his just being arrived out of the country, it was natural for Sylvius to be enquiring concerning his tenants and friends ; nor did he omit to enquire after the old rector of the town, whether he was yet crawling between heaven and earth. This hint was not thrown away, and it was therefore not judged necessary to enlarge upon it. The company drank freely after supper, but nobody was suffered to fill the glass for another : ‘ ’Tis always
‘ the law of my table, sir, (said Sylvius
‘ to the clergyman) that every man takes
‘ what he likes ; but were it not so (continued he) I should think it necessary
‘ to observe that rule when I had the
‘ honour of a visit from one of your
‘ robe.’

It

It was late before the company broke up; but it was not late the following morning before the clergyman waited on the ladies to welcome them to his parish: the lover had the address never to hint at the very name of the person who had been the occasion of his courting the acquaintance; but it was impossible for the visitant to conceal his rapture: he told the ladies he thought himself doubly happy that two such additions had been made to the families under his care; and set off the magnificence, the affluence, and the sobriety and sense of his new acquaintance, in as warm terms as he could have done if the subject of his applause had taken the coarser methods of a bribe, and instructed him in his intentions.

He who meditates a conquest worth the attention, must be at once resolute, and prudent in his attacks. Perhaps patience is the first requisite to the character of a real man of intrigue. Whatever might be the natural impetuosity of Sylvius's temper, reason dictated this reserve as necessary, and he always submitted to the injunction. It was five days

days before he threw himself into the way of the clergyman again, and he made no attempt toward seeing the face of the lady in the mean time: a pretended indifference is the only security against the discovery of a real passion; many a man, to his eagerness in seeing his mistress at her window, has sacrificed the fairest opportunities of meeting her in public: but this was not the foible of Sylvius. When he met his worthy friend, that gentleman's discourse turn'd as much on Lesbia, as when at Lesbia's aunt's it had on Sylvius. The artful lover heard every thing without emotion, and when he saw his visitant, in the genuine honesty of his heart, giving up his own hopeless passion to that which he endeavoured to raise in his breast, instead of being charmed with the accounts of the niece's beauty, asked after the aunt's understanding. He recollected the having seen a very agreeable lady at church on the Sunday before, and that he saw a person with her in whom devotion wore the most truly amiable countenance, under which he had ever seen it: this was reported to the old lady at the next visit of the clergyman; and, as the subtle creature who

who had thrown out the bait well knew there was no period, no condition of life above the reach of flattery, when properly directed. This succeeded as he had intended ; and when he join'd his reverend friend, as he was speaking to the ladies after the afternoon's service the next Sunday, he took care to engage that gentleman in such a manner between himself and them, that it was unavoidable but the aunt, when she asked the other to tea, must pay him the same compliment.

Few people would have behaved as Sylvius did on this occasion ; he declin'd the invitation ; but he did this with a civility that pleaded more in his favour than all that could have passed under the most favourable circumstances of the visit. There was an air of concern, with the indifference, that attended his declining the civility, and he made an excuse which had, at the same time, all the appearance of reality, and yet seem'd what, if he had been greatly inclin'd to go with them, he might have evaded. Sylvius was the theme of praise, both in the aunt's and in the clergyman's discourse, during the visit. His
modesty,

modesty, his goodness, his understanding, all so uncommon at such an age, were topics of the highest admiration. Only the young lady was silent. When the party broke up, she look'd her aunt full in the face, and a liquid pearl swelling in each eye as she spoke, ' Oh! madam, said she, what am I going to confess to you! but why should it be a secret? if ever I am to be happy, that gentleman must make me so.'

Sylvius was lost to all his friends and acquaintance. His whole soul was devoted to the conquest he had meditated, and he promis'd himself success; though he had not vanity enough to suppose what was truly the situation of the breast of his mistress. He let the succeeding day slip without seeing his reverend friend; on the next to that, he commission'd him with his compliments to the lady who had honour'd him with an invitation which he could not accept on Sunday, and begg'd him to tell her he should think she did him a great honour if she would give him leave to have the happiness some other afternoon, which he could not at that time accept. The consequence of this was a formal invitation; the clergyman

was.

was of the party, they spent the evening at the lady's lodgings, and a friendship and intimacy commenced.

Love is ingenious at contrivances. Lefbia found the means of engaging him, in consequence of some enquiry he was to make for her, to repeat his visit the next afternoon; some book he had mention'd gave her an opportunity to fix him for a third, when he was to bring it, and point out the particular passages to them: on the fourth, he was engaged to attend them to Hyde-park; and the fifth, form'd an appointment, in consequence of which, those who had despair'd of the new beauty, saw Sylvius with her in the stage-box. The principal attention, on the part of Sylvius, was all this time paid to the aunt, and while the angelic creature, who really employ'd every thought of his soul, had a thousand opportunities of admiring him more, she had no guess that her own accomplishments had any charms for him.

When these people were so truly fond of one another, it was easy for them to find occasions of being eternally together. Sylvius's equipage was convenient for an airing;

airing; Sylvius's footman was always in the way for a message; Sylvius was fond of public places, and it was therefore nothing particular to desire him to be at those which they attended. By degrees he was drawn into a pleasure in the things himself lik'd, and in consequence of Sylvius's equipage and attendance wherever they were, and of all their acquaintance seeing his servant with their cards, and their faces in his coach, it was universally reported that there must be something very particular in the acquaintance. It is thus that one familiarity leads to another in these intimacies, till those who saw there was nothing in the first step, think there is as little in the succeeding ones, and the whole town is appriz'd of a thing of which themselves are, perhaps, perfectly ignorant.

One of the first consequences of this report, was a visit from a very good friend to the aunt, to put her on her guard; this was succeeded by a second; the same day produced a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and all big with the same information, that the poor young creature was fallen into the hands of the most abandon'd fellow upon earth; all supported by stories of
of

of the deluding this person's daughter, of debauching such an acquaintance's wife, and every other formidable report that her malice could invent, or scandal propagate; and all concluding with the same observation, that the world was astonish'd at a woman of her character and understanding could countenance such a barefac'd design.

It was impossible to conceal such a torrent of reproach from Sylvius; he had expected it all from his first appearance with them in public, and he was prepar'd for it. He told the ladies, he had often been concern'd to find himself so strangely misrepresented among people who did not know him; and wish'd the old lady to tell him what part of his behaviour (for you, madam, said he, in the course of this short acquaintance, have seen it all) it was that could give occasion to the mistake of the world; that he might alter it.

This was an appeal that could not be resisted; the decision was entirely in his favour. The old lady, for the future, told every body who urg'd the same arguments, that it was a pity they did not know the person they spoke of; and Sylvius

vius enjoy'd, amidst the envy, and to the astonishment of all the world, an intimacy, of which he never disclos'd a thought of his making any sinister use, or indeed any use at all. The situation of the unhappy Lesbia was all this time deplorable; she could have borne any thing rather than that perfect indifference with which she was treated; the lover was not blind to that passion which was sure to second his attempt, when he should find things ripe to make it; and he enjoy'd that impatience, the consequences of which he well knew, when it should be surpris'd with his declarations.

The honour and the sedateness that appear'd in every part of Silvius's deportment, during the continued intimacy, would have been sufficient to calm every apprehension the busy tongues of people had attempted to raise in the breast of the aunt, even if there had wanted that apparent indifference to the young lady, which rendered all other security superfluous: the destin'd victim to this cool treachery, miserable in the coldness, the utter insensibility of a man on whom she doated to distraction, would have been early in the discovery of the first effort.

effort of a passion she wished to inspire, under whatever form it might have offered itself; but the utter absence of every hint towards such a subject, lulled her into a perfect, tho' far from an agreeable, security. As Sylvius proposed every party of pleasure, Sylvius attended at all, and was the guard in every place; his utter disregard of all other women gave the unhappy creature, who watched every emotion of his soul, a fixed opinion, that instead of that universal attachment to the sex, of which he was accused, he had a real dislike to them all; and the dread of his disclosing a passion that would have offended her, sunk into the scarce more supportable certainty of his having no passion at all.

Among other of the expeditions Sylvius had led the young creature into, which the aunt would not have endur'd to think of, but from their being his proposal, and in which her security, in regard to her niece, was, that he was her guardian and protector, was one of the Ranelagh masquerades. Lesbia had added two ladies to the party, and the coach of Sylvius carried them.

People of any degree of spirit for these assemblies separate as soon as they enter the room, that they may be at liberty for the occasional and unmeaning engagements, which make the principal entertainment of the place. Lesbia's charms could not be so hid by any dress, but that she must make conquests. She had her train of admirers; nor were there wanting some who distinguished her to be the beauty that had made the figure first at Vauxhall, and after that in many of the public places. This was the last of these entertainments for the season, and it was crowded. It is easy for people to lose sight of one another, for a long time, at this place on these occasions, and this happen'd to be the case between Lesbia and her party, when they thought it time to go home. Sylvius heard the complaint, and he improv'd upon the incident, under pretence of seeking the lady to join them. He gave her into the care of a young fellow of a good understanding and address to be entertained alone in one of the boxes. It was impossible for Lesbia to guess the reason of this; it was as impossible for her to have any suspicions of a person whom Sylvius recommended

mended. The young fellow saw the acquaintance that had been given him was worth cultivating, and the expectations of him who had made the party were so well answer'd by it, that after a pretended search of an hour for the lost Lesbia, the ladies submitted to be put into chairs, and attended home by his servant, with promises never to name the loss of their companion to the lady under whose care she liv'd.

As soon as these were dispatch'd Sylvius return'd to his little party. He affected an uneasiness at the intimacy in which the lady seem'd to have indulg'd her new acquaintance; he broke the *tete a tete*, and put himself in the place of the man who had been so happy in it. It was now his business to propose going home. Lesbia in public had no will but that of those whom she attended. They searched the house, the room, the gardens, for the people whom he had dispos'd of as he intended, and after a fruitless enquiry of every body they knew, for half an hour more, were reduced to a necessity of believing them gone, and got into the coach without them.

The

The servants had orders to go to the aunt's lodgings, but those of Sylvius were in the way. He grew ill as they got toward town; he became worse as they came into every new street; he was unable to support himself as they came toward that in which he liv'd. It was the lady's request that he should be set down at his own door, and not regard the ceremony of waiting on her home: she followed him out of the coach; there was no room in order but his chamber, and she had too much concern, and too little suspicion, not to follow him into it, and see that the servants were in the way to take care of him. Some hot wine reliev'd him wonderfully; the apocryphal sickness went off as suddenly and as conveniently as it had come on, and the recovering patient could not any longer command his passion; he threw his arms about his amiable companion; he thank'd her with all the eloquence of an innocent, but a tender embrace, for the care she had taken of him. He ask'd her, with a look of great disturbance, and a sigh which he affected to endeavour to conceal, whether she had any favourable thoughts of the person into whose care he had

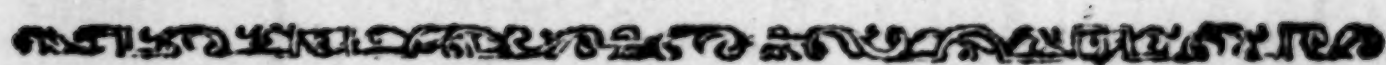
had so imprudently deliver'd her for an hour at the masquerade. He was transported at her assuring him she had not: he look'd earnestly and tenderly upon her for some moments, and, after that preparatory silence, told her he should have been unhappy if she could have thought favourably of another. The discovery, the confession of a passion in the man whom she had loved so long, whom she had so long despair'd of inspiring with the same sentiments, was joy too powerful for her to bear. The unexpected, the transporting declaration robb'd her of the power of voice or motion; she sunk into a swoon, and dropping her head upon his bosom, was lifeless for some moments.

Treacherous and base as the whole design of Sylvius had been, he was not villain enough to make a dishonest use of such an incident; perhaps he thought better of his address than to suppose he needed to have recourse to such an expedient, and would not receive by halves a joy, which he flatter'd himself, he saw approaching him in its full, its most enchanting freedom. When the lady recover'd, she found it her turn to make apologies, but Sylvius was in no temper to

hear them ; he seiz'd upon her hand ; he kiss'd her with an eager wildness in his looks, and left her no room to doubt his intentions of her immediate destruction. The unhappy creature, terrify'd as at the instant approach of death, and griev'd at the discovery of his designs even more than she was terrify'd at them, threw herself upon her knees, and with tears following one another in swift succession down her unwip'd cheeks, exclaim'd amidst a number of interrupting sighs, ' Is it, can it
 ' be your intention to destroy me ? —
 ' Can human nature support such ex-
 ' tremes, such instant changes from ex-
 ' tasy to horror ? — Yes, O cruel Sylvius !
 ' I own I love you, I adore you ; — but
 ' was this the passion I could not support
 ' the joy of your disclosing to me !' Sylvius neither was in a temper of mind to argue, nor was there any thing for him to say in his vindication ; he attempted to raise her, but she grew to the earth.
 ' I have no defence but my tears, no re-
 ' sistance but my entreaties ; but, heaven
 ' and earth, is it to Sylvius I am pouring
 ' them out in vain !'

The struggle was obstinate, but the lover found it impossible to be victorious ;
 from

from solicitations he proceeded to reproaches, from reproaches to entreaties, from eloquence to violence; but art, eloquence, and force were equally vain. On a sudden he broke from her; and, after recollecting himself a moment, he turn'd upon her with a smile of severity and triumph in his face, and told her, 'Well, 'obstinate angel, you shall not leave me 'yet: — you say, you love me.' 'I 'do, I do, reply'd the still kneeling, the 'distracted Lesbia; but' — 'But no- 'thing! reply'd the lover eagerly; if you 'love me, you will give me, under the 'authority of heaven, what only yourself 'of your sex could have refus'd to the 'man you love without it.' The lady threw herself at his feet; eloquent silence proclaim'd more than her assent to the proposal. One of those ready clergymen, who need no assistance from bishops or doctors-commons, was sent for; a friend of Sylvius's, and one of the Ranelagh party, were call'd out of their beds to assist at the ceremony, and in an hour the husband of Lesbia waited on her to her aunt to ask her approbation.



HISTORY II.

SORROW appear'd upon the face of the person whom the happy Sylvius had selected from the number of his friends to be the witness to his engagements. It was not that kind of grief that has its rise from the object before it, or that has arisen but on the moment in which it appears ; a settled habit of discontent dwelt on his brow, and the confusion of his mind disclos'd more than it conceal'd, while he endeavour'd to suppress his own misfortunes to enjoy the happiness of his friend's. It was not the custom of Sylvius to think himself happy, while those whom he loved were in difficulties and distress. The tears of a stranger would have spoil'd his relish for the highest enjoyment, and claim'd, as the tax upon his own pleasures, the drying up the sorrows of another.

It was in vain he enquir'd into the cause, in vain he press'd to know what friendship, what humanity, could do towards the redress ; the answer was, that
nothing

nothing exprefs'd the whole of the reply, nor could any entreaties obtain the story of a distrefs which no assistance could heal : the women have an art of persuasion unknown to those of our sex, eloquence comes with double force from their lips ; nor is it only where their own interest is concern'd that it is irresistible. Cynthio, for that was the name of the unhappy friend, became intimate in the family ; he could palliate, by the conversation of two people so qualified for all its prevalence, the melancholy which he determined as incurable ; he often saw them together, often alone ; and in the end, what the most earnest adjurations of his friend could not get from him, was drawn forth one afternoon by the persuasions of his lady.

‘ I, madam, said the glowing Cynthio,
 ‘ am also married, married to my utmost
 ‘ satisfaction, married to the only person
 ‘ I ever lov’d, to one who deserves to be
 ‘ lov’d ; for she is in all things like you :
 ‘ yet it is this marriage which condemns
 ‘ me to the despair with which you see
 ‘ me overwhelm’d : from which I never
 ‘ can be relieved. She who has a right to
 ‘ all my secrets, knows not the story of

‘ my misfortunes ; why then should I tell
‘ it to you ? but you have led me to the
‘ mention of it, and my full heart, eager
‘ to disclose its misery as obstinate to
‘ conceal it, cannot draw back the single
‘ step it has taken, but must follow that
‘ with the whole.

‘ What I have heard you say you owe
‘ to a husband, I, madam, owed also to
‘ a wife ; nor can you have more plea-
‘ sure than I have taken in declaring,
‘ that my fortune gave me tenfold satis-
‘ faction, because it was the gift of love.
‘ Extravagance was never in my temper ;
‘ accustomed to narrow circumstances, I
‘ did not launch into excesses when I
‘ found them easier : my happiness was of
‘ so long a date, that I saw, a week ago,
‘ four children who had a right to enjoy
‘ all their mother’s virtues, and from our
‘ œconomy promis’d to set out into the
‘ world with better fortune than their
‘ father. My friends esteem’d me, I ap-
‘ plauded myself, nor is there any satisfac-
‘ tion equal to a consciousness of having
‘ done our duty ; if I knew one that re-
‘ call’d my heart with more feeling trans-
‘ port, it was that my wife lov’d me.

The

‘ The death of a person of the family
‘ made it necessary for me to go to the
‘ country where the estate lies, to settle
‘ the division of a little portion of it that
‘ had fallen in by this accident with her
‘ uncle; she should have attended me;
‘ her situation, a situation which adds to
‘ the horror of my story, prevented her:
‘ I left with her my prudence, my virtue,
‘ my resolution: I did not know before
‘ that all my imagin’d conduct was but
‘ the result of her discretion. Her rela-
‘ tions receiv’d me as a man whom her
‘ accounts had endear’d to them; they
‘ solicited me from one another, they
‘ press’d me to stay beyond my time;
‘ but unhappily, she to whom alone I
‘ was accountable, consented with more
‘ than a willing compliance; she had joy
‘ in finding those who had once censur’d
‘ her imprudent choice, approv’d it; and
‘ she requested me to remain among
‘ them a little and a little longer.

‘ I was ill qualify’d for the diversions
‘ of the country; my constitution would
‘ not suffer me to join in their devotions
‘ to the bottle, and I was not enough
‘ accusom’d to the toils of the sports-

‘ man to think them pleasure. A de-
‘ votee, whom age had sever’d from the
‘ rest, unequal to the chace, and a cripple
‘ from the bottle, a man who had seen
‘ enough of the world to be excellently
‘ qualified for conversation, and had a
‘ pleasantry in his manner that would have
‘ compensated for a thousand defects, in-
‘ vited me to pass many of the days in
‘ his garden which they spent in the
‘ field, and often to sit over a single bottle
‘ with him, while they were draining their
‘ half dozens.

‘ I was charm’d with my companion’s
‘ conversation ; I was happy in his man-
‘ ner of living ; I was in raptures when
‘ he nam’d my wife, as he always did
‘ with the warmth of a lover and with
‘ the tendernefs of a parent : we have
‘ talk’d whole evenings of her sweetness
‘ and virtues ; he has told me the inci-
‘ dents of her earlier life, and I have
‘ equall’d them with those of her later ;
‘ he has given me transport with her
‘ praise, and he has seem’d, he has pre-
‘ tended, to hear me with equal rapture.
‘ Must I tell you, madam,’ continued
the unhappy man, altering the tone of his
voice as he spoke, ‘ that this was feign’d.
‘ Could

' Could you imagine that such a man was
 ' a mean, a mercenary, a designing vil-
 ' lain? Is it possible you can conceive
 ' that a wretch, sinking into his grave
 ' with age and infirmities, could be in
 ' all this planning the destruction of the
 ' person whom he cares'd, of those
 ' whom he pretended to esteem, who had
 ' a right to his paternal care and affec-
 ' tion? All was disguise and artifice about
 ' him; he could have join'd the chace
 ' with the youngest; he could see the
 ' stoutest sick at the debauch before him;
 ' it was a penance that he underwent
 ' while he threw himself into a plan of
 ' life that agreed with my disposition;
 ' and what I thought indulgence in those
 ' who spared me from their revels, was
 ' the treachery of joining in his unsus-
 ' pected designs upon me.

' Fond of that wealth he could no
 ' longer enjoy, he had no room for love,
 ' or natural affection in his breast: his
 ' tendernefs for the partner of my heart
 ' was affected, because he saw it most
 ' endear'd him to me; and the share she
 ' had in our conversation was the result
 ' of his discovering that those were the
 ' topics on which I was most lost to other

‘ subjects. When I had in a manner
‘ lived with him a week ; when he had
‘ put on the appearance of a regard, of
‘ a love for me, that must have deceiv’d
‘ any less practis’d in the ways of trea-
‘ chery than himself, his plot began to
‘ operate ; but in a manner in which it
‘ was impossible it could be suspected :
‘ evenings became long, and the subjects
‘ of discourse, which are not so eternally
‘ renew’d as in London, were almost ex-
‘ hausted, he propos’d backgammon, as
‘ a relief for the tediousness of an hour
‘ before supper ; and from one it by de-
‘ grees took up two, three, four, the
‘ whole evening ; and, in fine, a great
‘ part of the day.

‘ People who play for trifles at first,
‘ often rise in their warmth to larger
‘ sums ; we play’d upon the score, and
‘ I was vex’d to find, on making up the
‘ account, that I had won more of him
‘ than I had imagin’d, or could have
‘ wish’d. Superior to him at this game,
‘ I desired him to take his revenge at an-
‘ other ; he propos’d piquet, at which
‘ I told him I should have still more of
‘ the odds against him. I have been al-
‘ lowed, indeed, continued I, to play
‘ it

' it better than any body. My antago-
 ' nist was resolute, however, and I con-
 ' sented: we sat down for half-crowns,
 ' for I would not be brought to play for
 ' a sum where I thought I had so unfair
 ' an advantage. I lost the first and we
 ' doubled the stake; the second, and we
 ' doubled it again: the score was before
 ' us; my antagonist continued winning;
 ' and, eager to lose back his money, I
 ' consented with great readiness to double
 ' the last stake every time. The old fel-
 ' low at length threw down the cards in
 ' a passion, and swore he was ashamed to
 ' win so much of me. I read passions in
 ' his face, which I could by no means
 ' comprehend, as I could not suppose
 ' them rising from the circumstances:
 ' he smil'd when I took out my purse to
 ' pay him; and so little was I aware of
 ' the terrible advances of double stakes
 ' after a certain number, that I had no
 ' conception, on his shewing me on the
 ' score that he had won nineteen games,
 ' that I had lost more than all I was pos-
 ' sessed of in the world. Now, madam,
 ' continued the unfortunate man, tell me
 ' if I have not cause for all the melan-
 ' choly with which you see me oppress'd?
 ' To be ruin'd is sufficient reason for all

‘ the sorrow that can be discover’d in a
‘ countenance, even if the misfortunes in
‘ which ones self had no share were the
‘ occasion ; What then is the aggrava-
‘ tion of my distress, that I have brought
‘ it upon myself ? If I could be wretch-
‘ ed at the ruin of my own peace and
‘ fortune by such a fatal folly, what must
‘ the additional reproach of having in-
‘ volved in it another, one from whom I
‘ received all that I possess’d, to whom
‘ I have a thousand thousand obligations ?
‘ What the accumulated horror of see-
‘ ing my children, whom I left the happy
‘ possessors of sufficient fortunes ? Were
‘ it myself only that was to suffer I could
‘ bear it, because I have deserved it ; I
‘ could put a period to that life which I
‘ have so shamefully misemploy’d ; but,
‘ wretch that I am, even the last relief of
‘ the miserable is denied me ; I have no
‘ right in that life which owes the means
‘ of living to so many, tho’ it knows
‘ not how to pay the debt.

‘ But I rave, concluded he, I tire you
‘ with expostulations, while I keep back
‘ the story. Death was in my face, as
‘ those who were present have since told
‘ me, when we doubled every stake
‘ upon

‘ upon the score to the nineteenth; I
 ‘ could not deny my having lost the
 ‘ games: it was in vain to plead for a mi-
 ‘ tigation of the sentence; the account
 ‘ passed against me: ‘ You have a right,
 “ fir, said I, to all I have, take it, dispose
 “ me as you will; but keep the secret
 “ from your dear, your injured niece;
 “ receive her and her children into
 “ your family; let her suppose I still
 “ possess what I shall make over to you;
 “ and let me try, in some new world,
 “ to relieve, by a life of application,
 “ this fatal hour of folly.’ The tone
 ‘ and manner of my friend were chang’d
 ‘ from this moment; he told me I was
 ‘ an entire stranger to him; his niece
 ‘ he had not seen these twenty years,
 ‘ nor wished ever to do so again, and
 ‘ desired I would put an end to this
 ‘ romantic nonsense, and talk like a
 ‘ man of this world, about paying my
 ‘ debts of honour.

‘ I was thunderstruck at the change;
 ‘ my rage was greater than my distress,
 ‘ at the inhumanity of a man whom I
 ‘ had esteemed: I spoke to him as the
 ‘ provocation requir’d; as his insolence
 ‘ justify’d; he ordered pen and ink into
 the

‘ the room, and desired I would leave
‘ his house ; but first give him security
‘ for his money. I refused ; he told me
‘ he had expected as much ; ‘ But, sir,
“ says he, you shall find, that old as I
“ am I know how to deal with a rascal.’
‘ As he spoke this he locked the door
‘ of the room in which we were, pro-
‘ duced a brace of pistols from the
‘ closet, and told me, ‘ Sir, a brace of
“ balls, or a bond and judgment.’ I
‘ snatch’d a pistol with uncommon
‘ eagerness, to dispatch such a disgrace
‘ to human nature : as I was cocking
‘ it he bad me stay a moment : ‘ If you
“ kill an old weak man in his own
“ house, the consequence is obvious ;
“ but all the law, all the juries in the
“ world will justify me in my own de-
“ fence, and remember we have no wit-
“ nesses.’

‘ I threw down the pistol, and he in-
‘ sisted on his demand. I was wearied
‘ into a compliance ; fool that I was !
‘ my death I had deserved ; my life,
‘ I might have foreseen, could be
‘ only a curse to me, and my family
‘ would have been left in possession of
‘ their estate by my submitting to it.
Heaven !

‘ Heaven! concluded he, could I, who
 ‘ now wish to perish, though my death
 ‘ could be of no use to those whom I
 ‘ value more than I ever did my life,
 ‘ submit to a meanness, and be base
 ‘ enough to incur their destruction to pre-
 ‘ serve it!’

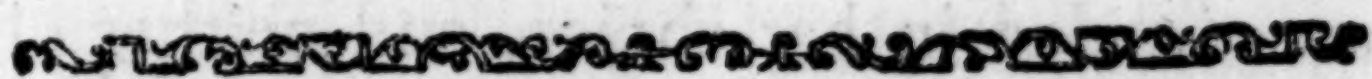
Such were the terms in which the ruin’d Cynthio related his story to Lesbia. Sylvius heard it, not impair’d in the hands through which it pass’d to him. His gay course of life could not have left him unacquainted with any person of note in town: he was surpriz’d, on asking the name of the winner, to be answer’d, Cassius! Cassius was a man who had been, early in life, led into the secret at some of the places of deepest play: he had, while he led the devoted bubbles to others, profited of them himself also: he had annuities to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds a year, from different dupes of his younger exploits; and had, partly from what he saved from this annual income, partly from his winnings from time to time, amass’d near twenty thousand pounds in cash. Cynthio’s affair was greater than he could have

have expected, and he determin'd it should be the last.

Sylvius, conscious that one so deep in the infernal secret could never play fair, was soon determin'd on what was to be done. He told his bride he must leave her for a day or two ; he entreated her to comfort the afflicted Cynthio as much as possible till his return ; and, taking with him two of the subtlest attornies this pregnant town affords, went post to the house of Cassius. ‘ You have won, I
‘ hear, sir, said he, so much of a gentle-
‘ man, your relation ; you have his secu-
‘ rities for it : you know I cannot be a
‘ stranger to the way in which you won
‘ it. Cynthio is my friend, continu’d he
‘ in a resolute voice, and shall not be in-
‘ jur’d ; if you will have the prudence to
‘ give up the advantage in silence, your
‘ character shall be safe ; if you chuse to
‘ make a bustle about it, I believe these
‘ gentlemen can inform you what will be
‘ the consequence of a chief justice’s
‘ warrant.’

When people know the world, and know the men they have to deal with, they come to very short resolutions. Few words

words made an end of this affair; the old fellow insisted upon the money being paid back which he had lost at backgammon, assuring Sylvius that he had given it to favour his design. Sylvius gave him his own security for it, and return'd to town with the securities, which he gave back into the hands of his amaz'd and transported friend.



HISTORY III.

POLYDUS and Alexas had commenced acquaintance with the earliest period of their lives; they were sons of the principal families in the same town; they had been accustom'd to play together from their infancy; they had been educated at the same school; the same tutor had attended them in their travels; and they had, during that interesting period of their lives, continued the amity which was begun when fancy rather than reason had inspir'd it.

Polydus, in their return from their tour, had left his friend at Lyons, fix'd, by the radiant eyes of some beauty, to the

the place; and without desire ever to see his country, at the expence of leaving the object of his warmer wishes. Alexas was not the only Man who had a heart susceptible of impressions from the fatal charms of this new beauty: among the number who became his rivals, an English nobleman, setting forward on his tour, was stopp'd by the soft enchantment. The rivals met at her lodgings; the lady was divided in her choice, and neither of them could give up his pretensions: they determin'd on the only decision; they pursued the same rout to the confines of Flanders: they fought; and Alexas was the more fortunate.

The consequence of a duel is seldom foreseen by those who engage in it; even the best is terrible. The death of his rival, instead of making the way easy to his mistress, separated Alexas from her for ever. The affair was no secret: it became necessary for him to quit Lyons; it was equally unsafe for him to see his own country, where the friends of his unhappy antagonist were powerful. He engaged in the Russian service; he made several campaigns with glory; he was esteemed, and he was preferred. From
the

the time of his fatal dispute with his countryman he had kept up a constant correspondence with his friend : the interest of Polydus, and of his friends, was employed to soften the rigour of those who had lost the hope of their family ; but every letter contained the same mournful piece of news, that they were resolute and cruel, and all applications ineffectual.

The person who had been most determinate and immovable in his resentment, was an officer of rank and honourable reputation. What all the entreaties in the world had attempted with the revengeful man in vain, an account from the Russian army of the manner in which the English volunteer had signaliz'd himself, effected. He declared that the man who could behave so well in the field could not have killed his nephew unfairly ; and sent to the relations of Alexas, to congratulate them on the account of the youth's gallant behaviour, and to assure them that he had no objection to his coming over when he pleased, nor should carry his resentment any farther.

Alexas

Alexas received the news with transport, he solicited his discharge from the service, and he obtained it with uncommon marks of honour. He wrote to his friends, and to none with so sincere a transport as to Polydus, that he was on his return. Their friendship was renewed with more than its original warmth; they lived together; their company was the same, their diversions the same, and there was not a pleasure the one enjoy'd of which the other had not his share. Among the number of their female acquaintance was Celia, a woman of spirit, and of some wit; and in consequence of those qualities, with an ungoverned temper, she was exceptionous and petulant. Both the friends admired her, but neither of them loved her; she could have been very happy in the addresses of either, but it was impossible while both were on the same terms with her. She would to-day give one the preference; and when she saw it gave no pain where she intended, she would to-morrow pay the same compliment to the other. She would to the one be eternally excepting against and quarrelling with the words that had dropped from the other in their last conversation;

tion; and from criticising on them without effect, she fell into the next step of misrepresenting them. Some expression of indifference, which Alexas had repeated to her from Polydus, on some occasion of no consequence, she had exaggerated in the repetition, till she taxed him with something which in reality he had not said. The lover, for they were both so in raillery, tho' neither any farther, denied his having said what she charged him with; and she insisted upon the credit of her account having had it from Alexas.

Women are seldom aware of the consequences of those disputes in which they engage men; thus I could observe trifles may be raised into things of importance by the way of treating them; that no ties are of force against an injury in reputation; and that while women are misrepresenting things in secret, they are playing with the lives of those who perhaps are most dear to them. When Alexas returned his visit, the coquette insulted him for imposing upon her; and, in all the petulance of a peevish beauty, told him every body did not think so lightly of her as he did, or as he would make her believe they did; and, as an instance, told him

him that she found Polydus had never said any such thing as he had repeated to her. Nothing is so tender as the honour of a soldier ; a suspicion of his veracity is like a doubt of his courage ; he was nettled at the reproof ; he was concerned that it was Polydus who had contradicted him : he called upon him before breakfast ; he asked him if he remember'd what he had said of a certain lady on such an occasion. Polydus reply'd with some warmth, that he remember'd what he had not said of her, though he had been charged with it. Alexas, fired at the expression, desired he would recollect, and not make his character suffer for his forgetfulness. The other reply'd, that it was impossible he should remember what had never happen'd. Both were piqu'd ; both were fiery in their disposition ; they grew more warm as they talked more on the subject, till some unhappy word pass'd between them, which it was impossible to put up.

Polydus walked out without company ; vexed, but without any determined resolution : Alexas follow'd him, as if he had understood it was expected that he should : when they were in a place distant from all
inter-

interruption, Polydus stopp'd and turned about : Alexas, with tears in his eyes, caught him by the hand, ' Friend ! — What are we doing ? ' Polydus was pale, irresolute, and yet too angry to be melted by the affectionate manner in which his friend had addressed him. ' What can I do, ' said he, drawing as he spoke. Alexas could not hesitate on such a summons ; the conflict was long ; neither attempted to hurt the other ; the intent on both sides was to disarm ; but, by some malicious fate, Polydus in turning slipp'd and fell upon the point of his antagonist's sword.

Alexas snatched him up in his arms ; called heaven and earth to witness that he would have died rather than willingly have hurt him. The unhappy youth confessed the fatal accident of his own seeking ; even he had compell'd him to what had occasioned the misfortune ; begg'd he would forgive him, and expired in his arms. Chance had brought up two villagers to the place as the dying Polydus made this declaration ; they comforted, in their homely way, the distracted Alexas ; and promised to assert, whenever it should be necessary, what they had heard. It was the opinion of the unfortunate youth's

youth's friends, that be whatever the circumstances, it was his business to escape; since the former misfortune would cancel the effect of every favourable incident in this. He obey'd their request; he took no leave of any one; he went without preparation; and has never been heard of. The immediate occasion of their quarrel was never known; but that the woman, whose misrepresentation had occasioned it, was in some manner the cause, was never doubted. The families were both unhappy in the highest degree; and the occasion of it, though supposed but the innocent cause, was avoided by all her own sex as well as the other; branded, as the poet phrases it, for the mischievous Monimia, and she suffered what would have been cruel, had she no more deserved it than the world supposed; but what in truth was less than justice.



HISTORY IV.

PUBLIUS had been thrown very early into life with an inconsiderable fortune; his inclination led him to the sea service: he engaged in it at the time of the late war; his friends and his little fortune procured him a commission. He was successful in his cruises, and at three and twenty sat down at home with about forty thousand pounds. Restraint, oftner than liberty, makes people profligate, extravagant, and abandoned; when pleasures are severely withheld from them, they lie under a very unfair disadvantage; the same object, when open to their view, is often treated with contempt. The early knowledge Publius had of what are called the pleasures of the town, led him early to despise them: he was cold to the bottle; women of abandoned character were odious and distasteful to him. He fell into that true and happy way of thinking, which represents a settled life as the only one that has charms for a rational mind; which paints home as the great seat of pleasure; which declares it in vain

to seek satisfaction elsewhere, if it is wanting in the retired moments; and which sets at the head of the sources of happiness, a sociable, good-natured, and virtuous wife.

The young women of this time, when they frequent public diversions in expectation of marrying happily, set out on the worst principle in the world; the men, who are themselves most fond of these amusements, despise those of the other sex who are always seen at them; and even if they did not despise they would be afraid of them. The virtues of a retired, not the gaiety of a public life, are the recommendation to a husband: the person who is likely to promote his happiness at home, not who is eminent for advancing the pleasure of other people abroad, is she whom a man of judgment will select. The husband of true taste, though he would have every man approve his wife, would have no man admire her but himself; and even if perfectly free from suspicion in his own breast, he will remember that a numerous acquaintance among the gay and the forward is not easily shook off; and that while his confidence in the wife, whom he has chosen, remains as en-

tire

tire as when he made that choice, the suspicions of others may give him pain, though they have no right to create distrust.

Such were the principles on which the prudent, the virtuous Publius, founded his prospect of happiness in that only state which can give it. He frequented the assemblies of the gay and the idle, but he paid no regard to the beauties or the wits who there threw themselves into the way of being admired. To get into the method of finding a proper woman for his intended plan of happiness, he fell into family parties; he was every where well received, every where esteemed: all the women looked upon him as a person who would marry; and without professing it as his purpose, or declaring that he was endeavouring it, he said nothing to contradict their opinions, by the equal respect which he shewed to those of the largest fortunes, and those of no fortune but their accomplishments, he gained universal esteem, in the opinion of his paying no regard to mercenary views in his choice.

The lady on whom he fixed, justified the favourable sentiments of those who had given him this character of disinterestedness and generosity. He married the sister of the unhappy Alexas, a lady whose virtues were equal to her brother's misfortunes; but whose fortune, after the provision for a number of other children, amounted to no more than would have recommended her to some meaner tradesman. The distress of the family was in some degree alleviated by this favourable event. Publius would hear, with tears of approbation, the story of that gallant youth's misfortunes; he revered his virtues in the sister, and loved to call such a man by a name so endearing as that by which he now expressed himself when he spoke of him. The generally known unfortunate, the really guilty cause of that fatal catastrophe, had suffered an equal punishment for it. She had been the detestation and contempt of all who knew the youths, which was of all who knew her, from that time. The first act of generous compassion the wife of Publius shewed, was the inviting Celia into her family. When the sister of the unhappy exile countenanced her, all the world began to look upon her with some degree of favour;

vour : few were able to form proper conceptions of that greatness of mind which receives those as the noblest objects of favour who have least pretensions to it ; and in consequence, it was supposed that the person whom one so nearly concerned in the incident received as a friend, was less the cause of it than had been imagined.

As there are people to whom no demerits or ingratitude are of force to prevent a continuance of their favours, there are, in the other extreme, those whom no good offices, no obligations can bind to friendship, or to faith and honesty. There are allurements which the artful of the female sex are often possessed of, which are wanting in those of the highest merit. All these were Celia's, and no woman knew how so well to employ them. The sister of Alexas studied to recommend herself to the man whom she considered as her lord and patron as well as her husband, by all the assiduities of love and engagements of affection. She remembered, in the man who lov'd her, the friend who had made her fortune ; and she tasted that fortune with a tenfold sweetness, because it was the gift of him

she loved. There is a reserve in modesty which even the wife finds it difficult to shake off, and which the husband ought to revere ; but there have been a thousand instances, in which this single article has given the balance in disfavour of the wife, when the person who has been preferr'd to her has been inferior in every qualification.

It was mean as well as dishonest in the obliged Celia, to employ the artillery of all her wantonneffes on the husband of her friend ; but she succeeded, and added one example to the observation. The wife was in every respect superior, every way more amiable than her companion ; but there was a freedom in the rival which courted even the sober Publius irresistibly. He was vexed with himself, while he gave into the ungenerous passion ; he hated, he despised the object of it, while he found something that he could not but like in her manner ; he often called up his reason to his assistance, and he as often declared in favour of her who had a right to the preference ; but these divisions were only till some opportunity offered of courting again the folly he despised.

The

The person of the husband the female friend soon shared with her who had the sole right to it; his divided affections were most in favour of the latest acquaintance, and he grew uneasy in the company of the woman he esteemed, and impatient for that of the trifler whom he contemn'd. Such is the perverseness of the human heart, such the uncertainty of love, even on its best foundations. The artful Celia made her conquest by degrees. It was long before she would suppose the liking of Publius more than caprice: when he convinced her of its reality by its permanence, she laughed at the humble portion of it with which she was honoured: she banter'd him when he offer'd to persuade her of his fondness, together with the real love he paid his wife; and from step to step advanced to the declaring she would share his heart with no body. 'I own' says she, interrupting her discourse with well dissembled sighs, and wiping real or pretended tears from her cheeks as she spoke; 'I own I have no title to your love; I have forfeited your esteem by the method in which I obtained it; I acknowledge the rightful claim of the woman whom I have injured in attempting it; let her take it back; it is my

‘ misfortune to love you, but it shall not
‘ be my folly any longer to give up my
‘ whole soul to one who doats on ano-
‘ ther.’ The husband found himself in-
volved in all that perplexity which at-
tends an unjustifiable intimacy; the mi-
stress was possessed of every art to increase
it; and cautious as she had been in her
first motions, now she thought her con-
quest secure, she had resolution equal to
her other virtues.

Nothing is so unsuspecting as inno-
cence; the wife of Publius had been in a
thousand fears that the person she had in-
troduced into the family should not be
agreeable to him: she had seen their
growing friendship, as she esteem’d it,
with great satisfaction; and she was now
unhappy in discovering their frequent dis-
putes and threatned coldness: she would
plead for her fair friend with all the rhe-
toric of love and compassion; and when
the husband, unable to stand the shock
of the unknown accusation, confounded
to think of injuring such tenderness and
virtue, would start from her, she would
follow him with her entreaties, and beg
to know what unlucky fault her friend
had committed; what ignorant offence
she

she had been so unhappy to fall into ; and would engage her honour and her peace for her avoiding it hereafter, as soon as she should learn that it was displeasing to him.

'Tis a kind of fascination that forces men, when they have fallen into the road of ill, from but attempting to quit it. Publius had all the generosity of soul a human breast is capable of entertaining ; he had virtue and honour in his nature in their highest excellence ; he could not but feel the reproach these sollicitations convey'd the more strongly, because she who spoke them was ignorant of it : he could not but reverence the virtues of his wife ; he could not but abhor the vices of her rival, when set in this glorious competition : but such is the infatuation of guilt, such the ensnaring chains that are about it ; that, incapable of resolving, where he saw reason, justice and gratitude point the way, he continued to be attach'd where he despis'd, to fly what he ador'd, and to devote his fondness where no passion was due but his detestation.

Celia trembled at the hazard to which she had exposed all, in this bold, this insolent demand ; but when she saw she was not thrown off, she knew she should succeed. Tired of a thousand repeated disputes and reconcilements, of employing in vain the whole artillery of flattery and solicitations, she determined on the last effort, and put on it a face of seriousness that would have deceived a man less infatuated by her charms than the devoted Publius. ‘ I am unwilling, said she, with seeming great perturbation, to hurt that peace which can admit no remedy ; but I cannot bear to see myself slighted for want of that sanction which it never was in my power to give my fondness ; while she is carefs’d who knows no use of that sanction but to abuse it. Don’t suppose, continued she, that I would have demanded even half your heart from one who had a right to the whole ; but what are forms, and words and ceremonies ? what are engagements of the tongue when the heart violates them ? Constancy, I think, ought to claim its reward when un sanctified by rites, while that engagement, which is ever so
‘ sacred

‘ sacred in its nature, should lose its power
‘ when broken.’

All this was mystery and wonder to Publius ; he could as soon have suspected the truth of Heaven as the virtue of his wife ; false as he had been to his own vows, he knew she had preserved her’s sacred ; he knew no provocation could have tempted her to such a vengeance ; and he had always made a merit of his secrecy in his own infidelity, and was assured she never so much as suspected it. He treated the suspicion as a chimera, and abhorr’d the baseness of her mind who could attempt to add injury to injury by the suggestion. In matters of polity ’tis said, that monarchs often love the treason while they hate the traytor. In love, on the contrary, we often detest the baseness while our hearts are weak enough to doat upon the persons who have been guilty of it. Had Publius called up that resentment which the attempt deserved, he had perhaps crush’d it in its birth. Contempt had less force. She who would have dreaded to repeat that which had threatned her power, continued her plots when she was only despised for the suggestions. Not a week but produced some

new design upon the character of the innocent, who was all the time urging every thing in favour of the person who was determin'd on her ruin. The ill success of one attempt served to inspire rather than to discourage another; and the husband did not see that perseverance would effect that which to a single attack was impossible. From inventing circumstances, the cunning, the resolute destroyer, came to the art of using those which offer'd, of misrepresenting, instead of creating, and torturing innocent and unmeaning incidents into designs and contrivances. What the other scheme had attempted in vain, this urged with more appearance of success. The husband, while his confidence was unshaken, could not but sometimes be surpris'd at the concurrence of accidents, and before he could harbour a thought of his wife's dishonour began to suspect her discretion. The least ground gain'd in such a siege is of the utmost import; no foot that is lost is ever recover'd; the subtle engineer closed where she saw the concessions made, and planted all her batteries against the post that was least defended.

It was easy for her to infer, that what seem'd imprudence might be the unguarded escapes of a real crime; and she soon convinced him that the virtue of women was so deeply dependant on the guard that was kept over it, that the husband had little right to be secure in that of his wife when he gave up her prudence. With such artifice was the scheme of destruction of this innocent laid; with such address and invincible resolution was it continued, from believing that it was possible his wife might be guilty, he was easily led to suspect that she was so; and the contriver of the mischief, too sensible that it would be impossible to find real confirmations of his jealousies, devised imaginary and pretended ones: the first remote, but tending towards suspicion; the next commanding doubt; the succeeding ones confirming that doubt, and leading it apace towards certainty.

Our dramatic writers have given us characters of virtue and innate honour seduced into suspicion when there was no foundation; but they have made the agents men, and the motive revenge; they should have allow'd to women the praise of this treachery,

treachery, in preference to that sex which want those thousand wantonnesses and indulgence which make the way most easy for false thoughts : and they should have known no passion can be so fruitful in invention, or so daring, or so resolute in the execution of its purpose, as love.— What no cunning but that of a woman, what none but that of a beloved woman could have effected, that of the abandon'd Celia contrived and executed. She led the credulous, the misguided object of her deceit from error into error ; he who had reject-ed all suspicion while his confidence was entire, now that it was shaken saw causes of it where even she who had laid the scheme did not discover them. The very conduct of his unhappy wife, though far as virtue could place it from reproach, administer'd to it, now in his breast ; his jaundiced eye saw every thing of its own colour, and every innocent word was tortur'd into meanings that countenanced the suspicion. Publius grew miserable ; the innocent cause of his concern, though she form'd no guess at the nature of it, shared in it as it was his. Only the cunning contriver of the scene enjoy'd it. She found the heart of the husband, as it began to be alienated from the person who had a
right

right to it, becoming more and more her own. She redoubled her attention and fondness as she found the esteem, and in consequence the passion for the wife lose ground; she lamented the uneasiness which her own wiles had occasioned; she wish'd she had let him sleep on under his injuries, rather than to have been any way the cause of so much pain to him: in fine, she work'd him into so thorough a belief of the perfidy of the lady, and so perfect a fondness for herself, that he only wish'd for an opportunity of proving the guilt upon the head of his wife, abandoning her to the world, and sitting down in peace, as he express'd it, with Celia in her place.

The mine was now ready, there only wanted the putting fire to the train. Celia advanced thus far, by steps at once the most cautious and the most daring, determined to finish her designs as she had begun them: as she had still the perfect confidence of the wife, as she found in the husband an ear ready to receive any species of suspicion she should devise, it was easy for her to form conversations that had never pass'd; and, under the seal of secrecy, to deliver things that were the
imme-

immediate creation of her fancy, as the result of their discourse. 'Tis very rare that women who give up their virtue confine their escapes to the person with whom they have sacrificed it. To do justice to the worst characters, is the duty of those who would describe them impartially, and not to make that of Celia more infamous than the reality ; it must be owned there appeared no cause of suspicion that she had admitted any person to her favours beside Publius. Whether an affection for his person had kept her constant, or whether her deep designs upon his fortune had represented the pleasure of vanity and deceit as not worth the hazard they would cost, were the source of this constancy, it is not easy to say : whatever it were, she found that necessary view in carrying on her scheme which she had not been tempted to in point of indulgence. She had for some time attempted the resolution of the wife, by betraying Publius to her, as to her certain knowledge, engag'd in an intrigue with another, and had urged her to the retaliation of the perfidy : when this had been received without credit, and the scheme rejected with horror, she advised the carrying on a seeming intimacy of
this

this kind with somebody, to call him back by jealousy, since fondness had no effect: but the heart of the unhappy creature, as much above the giving cause of suspicion as the receiving it on any foundation, declined the latter, if not so warmly, yet as resolutely as the former proposal. It never enter'd into her thoughts that her bosom friend could have designs against her in this; but, without even suspicion of that, she grew cool to the person who had endeavoured to set her husband in an ill light with her; and as she saw her continue the attempt, with a resolution wholly unaccountable to her, she took up a determination to be rid of her, and was forming schemes of many kinds to propose to her husband as methods of placing her in a state of independency.

Celia saw the intent in her eyes; she discovered it in its full extent in the conversation of her husband; she found it her interest now in every sense to hasten to a conclusion with her schemes. Celia became irreconcilable to her friend, and saw her ruin necessary to her own preservation; the husband, such is the weakness of the human mind, such the force of

of jealousy to misrepresent, understood the eagerness of his wife to be rid of Celia as a proof of the truth of his suspicions, and suppos'd her impatient under the eye of one who saw too much, and whom she fear'd to trust. In such situation were the hearts of the wife and husband when Celia put her final plot in execution. She had from time to time suffer'd, or rather made overtures to a gay fellow, who sometimes visited Publius, and he had received the compliment with a very firm resolution of making the utmost advantage of it. She engag'd him in continual visits at the house; she advis'd him, to prevent suspicion of what was their real motive, to be more than ordinarily complaisant to and assiduous about her friend; the lover acted, he over-acted indeed his part, he often gave the lady disgust; but the dread of engaging her husband in a dispute kept her within bounds in the resentment. When a plot of this kind is laid against the innocent, every part of the behaviour of the person who is the object of it is made to confirm the suspicion. Publius was led to see the ardour with which the gallant attack'd the wife, and to see the faint resentment with which she return'd it.

it. The visits of the lover were more and more frequent, and Celia contrived they should almost always be when Publius was abroad. She would engage him out on purpose; she would engage the lover to be there at the time, and she would bring back the husband to find him alone with his wife: it was difficult for him to keep his temper under the appearance of such repeated provocations; but the determin'd separation from his wife, and the promis'd satisfaction of living fully and at liberty with the woman whom he now infinitely preferr'd to her, gave him patience to wait a period which should at once make the discovery, and lay down the means of reparation.

When the artful contriver of the mischief had thus far prepared for her success she open'd her great secret. — ‘ Publius, ‘ said she, you will not know how much ‘ I love you, since gratitude would com- ‘ mand any service I could do you with- ‘ out that latter principle. I cannot but ‘ own that I have the same obligations to ‘ my friend; and, till her infidelity to ‘ you destroy'd it, I had the same affec- ‘ tion for her. I have pursued her thro’ ‘ all her disguises; I have succeeded; I ‘ have

‘ have now the certainty of her treache-
‘ ry ; yet such is my weakness for her,
‘ though she no way deserves it of me,
‘ that I am averse to the betraying of
‘ her.’ Publius swallow’d the bait with
greedy appetite ; he renewed his engage-
ments to take her instantly to his house ;
he redoubled his fondness ; he insisted on
her telling him all she knew, and giving
him the instructions for the wish’d dis-
covery.

The brain of Celia would perhaps have
labour’d a great while in vain to find out
an opportunity of executing her designs.
Such an accident offer’d at about a week’s
distance. There was a masquerade at the
Haymarket ; she appointed her lover a
rendezvous there, and she begg’d her
friend to be particular till that scene of
intrigue should discover all that he had a
right to know. She employ’d the inter-
mediate time in preparing Publius for his
revenge, and in engaging his unhappy
wife to go to the place where she had laid
the plan of rousing it by false appearances.

Publius was engag’d in the country ;
Celia was to attend the lady at the mas-
querade. The size of the wife and mi-
stres

strefs were nearly the same ; the dresses they order'd were perfectly different ; Celia's was a plain domino ; the wife's a very conspicuous close habit. Publius, who went out but on the morning of the day, saw both their habits tried on ; and a friend who, as he thought, was with him by accident, but whom Celia had in reality sent thither for her purposes, saw them with him. The pretended lover of the devoted innocent, the real one of Celia, was, by her artifices, kept from the house, and letters were, by her own appointment, sent from him as on a journey into Ireland.

The husband set out on his pretended journey ; the artful Celia, toward evening, dress'd with her friend ; but as she was trying on the mask a note came to tell her of the death of a distant relation, and the necessity of her instantly applying to an attorney who was acquainted with the affairs of the family, and who was then waiting for her. Celia pretended to have a mind to let it alone till the next day ; the wife insisted on her going ; said they were three hours earlier than she chose, and that she would take the liberty of playing

playing at cards, at a friend's whom she named, in her dress, till she came back,

Celia and the deluded creature went out together. The chairmen of the former had orders to the Temple; but they were soon superceded by others: she hastened to the warehouse where she had a dress ready, the counterpart of her friend's. Every ribband, every flounce the same: she dress'd at the place where it was made, and she hastened to the Haymarket.

Celia had appointed a rendezvous with her lover in terms that gave him expectations of the highest kind; and she had desir'd him to be unmask'd, that she might know him, if any thing should mislead his memory about her habit. Publius went to the room alone, disguis'd, and in a whole mask. Celia was in this secret, and the person who had breakfasted with him, the only one who had seen his wife's dress, was let into it. He watch'd his coming in; he join'd him on the instant; and, though Publius was peevish, and deny'd his being the person, the other, who had not his instructions by halves, continu'd with him.

They

They had not been many minutes in the room when a person enter'd without a mask. The singularity of this drew the eyes of the one as well as the other on him ; but what was the horror of Publius ! how were all his suspicions turn'd to certainties, in his imagination, on seeing this, the man whom he had so long suspected to have a design upon his honour ! whom he had been told he should that evening see attempting to accomplish his disgrace, tho' he had pretended to be at a distance to disguise his villainy. The husband had his eye constantly upon him ; his friend ask'd him if he was not all this time in the country : he agreed that some intrigue must have conceal'd him all this while, and that to-night would explain it. Publius could scarce contain his indignation ; what the person, who was with him, spoke at random, he understood as an insult on his misfortunes ; and only the mightier consideration of his revenge for a deeper crime could have prevented his making this serious. It was evident that the gallant was looking for a companion ; he paid no regard to any body that was about him, and his eye was directed among every cluster of people, and upon every

every new figure that enter'd the door. Publius join'd him; he made his companion speak, that his own voice might not discover him. The other supposed he had been out of town; he was puzzled for an answer; he would have slipp'd away, but they kept close to him; he was absent in his answers, and hardly civil in his behaviour. They bore it all; they endeavour'd to make him confess an intrigue, but in vain; they tax'd him with coming in without a mask, and he answer'd that he hated the confinement of one.

While they were sifting him in vain, there enter'd an explanation. Celia came in alone, in the habit of the wife of Publius: the friends had, at this time, hold of both arms of the gallant; Publius started; his companion gave him a pull by the sleeve; the gallant insisted on being rid of them, and at length broke from them. Though he had released himself from their arms, their eyes were kept upon him; they saw him follow the object of their attention; they saw her turn and throw herself into his arms with rapture. Publius was convinced; he wanted to be rid of his friend to call the injurer of his honour to account; but that

that gentleman now more openly, and declared he would not suffer it. ‘ If you leave me, said he, I will give notice to the captain of the guard of your intent, and you will be put under arrest. No farther harm can happen here, and you will, perhaps, be convinced that all this is an innocent frolick.’ The husband submitted, because he found it was in vain to contest. They follow’d the fond pair, and were convinced every moment, that real warmth on one side, and real tenderness on the other, were the source of their behaviour. The friend ask’d if it was certainly the person they suppos’d, and wonder’d how she could have dropp’d the lady that was to have been her companion. The husband had been too punctual in his notice of the dress to be liable to a possibility of mistake, and he knew too well the history of her being alone ; Celia having promis’d him that she would drop her, to give a full opportunity to her executing her purposes. While they were in the height of their observation, the people, who were the subject of it, retir’d to a corner of one of the seats near the door. They were too intent upon their own part to regard that which others were acting. It was easy to

see that the lover was pressing something very warmly, which the lady refused but very coldly; he grew now earnest, the lady less averse; he seized upon her hand, the lady hardly try'd to pull it away; he led her out at the door, and the husband saw them get into two chairs.

Not only the author of the mischief was prepared to deceive Publius, every body about him had their parts, or were led into the favouring the scheme without knowing it. The friend, who had thus long kept him company against his will, now told him, 'I have no advice to give you;' and falling back, left him to pursue his own intentions. Publius got into another chair: as he had expected the injury, he had not come unprovided with the means of revenge: he ordered his chairmen to follow the others at a little distance, and saw them stop at the door of a private house in Chancery-lane.

He gave a guinea to the chairmen, bad them be near the door, and if they heard his voice, to break into the house. When he had given them instructions which might save him, if he should have
fallen

fallen into the hands of a band of ruffians, he knocked at the door. It was no sooner opened to him than he saw all the internal apparatus of a bagnio, though nothing had appeared without doors. Publius had always great readiness of mind; he profited of the discovery which he could by no means expect to have made: he gave them orders to look out, and see if there was not a chair coming: he bad them be upon the watch if any body knocked at the door, and if a person in a blue domino came to send up to him. He ordered a room and gave instructions for a supper. He found he was too far off that in which the persons whom he had followed were, and, under some pretence of dislike, got into the next to them.

He could hear the buz of their conversation; he could distinguish kisses; he heard the shoes thrown off; and heard them follow one another into bed. He burst open the door that parted the two rooms, and before they could form any idea of their danger, destroyed them both at one thrust. He threw down the sword, made the best of his way

out of the house, and, in the confusion of his mind, went home.

The company whom the wife of Publius had visited while Celia's pretended business detained her, expected the visit of a masquerade party in their habits: it was very late before they came; but Celia being not yet arrived, the lady, who thought she had more right to her pardon than she could have to her farther patience, joined the company who were going. They entered the room at one door, as the party, among whom all the mischief had happened, went out at the other: their common acquaintance, who had just parted with the husband under such terrible circumstances, was rejoiced to see the wife come in again; he stared to see the company about her; and, in the eagerness of his uncertainty, asked her how she had met them, and what good genius had brought her back. The questions were strange, but the whim of a masquerade justifies a thousand extravagancies: the lady was turning away with some slight answer, when he pull'd off his mask, and asked her, for heaven's sake, if it was possible, to give him a better account of the last
half

half hour than he thought it easy she should.

The lady did not resent what she saw was spoke with emotion, and had an honest meaning: ‘ You surprize me, sir, said she; but these ladies will assure you they have brought me in their coach from Bond-street.’ ‘ And you have not been in the room before?’ ‘ Certainly not,’ reply’d the lady. ‘ I will believe you, reply’d he, though it contradict my senses; for what I saw before more contradicted my reason.’ It was impossible for the wife to conceive the meaning of all this; she was surprised to hear every body ask her what she had done with her gallant; but little suspicion had she of the origin of the confusion.

The gentleman, who had spoke to her, hurried from bagnio to bagnio; from tavern to tavern. He questioned every chairman he met whom he had carried; he asked every watchman if they had not seen two chairs; but all to no purpose. About five in the morning he knocked at Publius’s door: the chairmen who carried home the lady

were wiping their faces at the threshold. She had found her husband on his knees, with his pistols on the table. Publius fainted at her entrance; her shriek called up the servants; and before they could begin an explanation, the gentleman, who had been in search of him to inform him of his error, came into the room.

‘Whom have I murder’d!’ was the first thing heard from Publius. The lady could scarce support herself at the sound. It was soon reconcil’d to him that his wife was innocent; and the absence of Celia made them quickly suspect who it was that had been guilty. The whole transaction had been so sudden, the person of Publius so perfectly unknown at the house, and his escape made so long before any thing was found out, that he appeared during the noise of the murder, and was not suspected. The people of the house were taken up; the chairmen were advertised; but they could give no account of the person whom they brought. Every thing carried a face of security; but as they were at dinner, at the distance of about a week, the sword-cutler
who

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who serv'd Publius, desired to speak with him in private. The sword, which had at first been secreted by a servant for the sake of the hilt, was found in her trunk, the name of the maker was on the shell, and he could not but remember to whom he had sold it. He gave the family notice to escape, and they lost no time in it. Publius has sacrificed his country to the crime he committed; but the wife finds her innocence rewarded by a renewed affection of her husband, which makes every kingdom home to her.

~~THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME~~

LETTER VI.

LOVE is not the only passion capable of leading the human heart through all the stages of a false repentment, and of blinding the perceptions which would have discovered the fallacy in time; revenge will do as much. The friend of Publius found it; he was, of two unhappy people, the man who had suffer'd the injury, and therefore he never could be forgiven; for as the poet justly, tho' severely expresses it,

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For-

*Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong,
They never pardon who have done the
wrong.*

Arrius, whose honesty had been deceived in the appearances which the cunning of the mistress of his friend had thrown in his way, lived to be a sacrifice to a deceit of the kind, and his innocent inquisitiveness proved as busy in his own misfortunes as it had done in that of the man he loved.

Arrius was a descendant of a noble family, and tho' too remote to inherit the title, was not without all the advantages of such an alliance. The family had been unhappy in a thousand disputes, and the nearer relations having forfeited the opinion of the person at that time at the head of it, this distant one had been invited to share the favours to which they had more natural right. The present possessor of the estate and honour was in his nature morose and unforgiving; he had a nephew, who, such is the depraved turn of the human heart, while he suffer'd by his vices copy'd them. Age and diseases had concurr'd in souring the natural dispo-

disposition of his lordship to a great degree, and the servile humility with which this expectant had been used to obey him was not at length sufficient to continue him in his esteem. There is a natural aversion in such as are too much devoted to riches, to hate as well as envy those who are to possess them at their deaths. There did not want faults in the temper and behaviour of Flavio to have justified the old man's distaste to him; but perhaps this innocent crime pleaded more against him than all those: nor would it have been in the power of all the virtues in the world to have compensated for its influence.

The sons of the old lord, for two of them were yet living, had been given up in favour of this nephew, and it now became his turn to be sacrificed to the new favourite. Arrius had been mentioned to the uncle as a youth of great merit and moderate expectations. He was invited from his family and friends, the course of a useful education interrupted, and the favour of the noble relation set in the place of his expectations from the application to an employ which often provides well for those who profess it.

It was natural for Flavio to hate the person who rival'd him in what he had even deserved by his assiduities and compliance: It was not easy for the old man to conquer the aversion he found rising to every person who was, though by his own appointment, to lord it over his family after him. Arrius was received as a person whom he should provide for, without any the most distant hint of being made his heir: and while he incurr'd the hatred of the discarded Flavio, by his perfect content with what was said to be intended him, preserved the friendship of his patron. Flavio, though disgraced, was not forbid the house; he no longer lived in it, but he visited daily: Arrius, who still regarded him as the principal in the inheritance, treated him with the respect due to a superior; and while he suspected him of the worst offices, was doing him the best in his power with his uncle.

Though the favourable things Arrius was continually saying of the nephew could have no effect in his service on the inexorable temper of the old man, they were of vast force in his own cause. The Patron became convinced, that he who
had

had no dread of rivalry could have no expectations, and found at length one who did not see that he was to inherit all which himself was so unwilling to leave behind him. Though it was no easy task to keep on but tolerable terms with the old man, Arrius kept on good ones; but that assiduity and gentleness which could gain upon the perverseness of age and peevishness in him, had no effect on the jealousies of the person whom, without knowing, without even suspecting it, he had supplanted. He could not get the sullen Flavio to be but upon good terms with him in appearance; there was always a surly aversion in his looks; he would not hear of those words of consanguinity, to which the other had a right, without impatience; and even in the company of his patron was rude and assuming, beyond that preeminence which the mildness of temper and humble expectations of Arrius gave him. Though the ill behaviour of the nephew could produce no returns from the person against whom he had conceived a very unjustifiable distaste, he made this real fault a pretext for indulging his natural rancour, and banished him his sight for ever. The good offices which Arrius attempted in favour

of his rival, served but to set him in a blacker light with the person to whom they sought to recommend him; and in time a very unjustifiable revenge, which, in compliance with the dictates of his natural disposition, and in consequence of the example his uncle had set before him, he attempted to execute on the favourite, condemn'd him to the loss of that little which the patron had allotted him when he no longer left him all.

Arrius, with his other virtues, had prudence in a very uncommon degree; he saw the cards he had to play, and the importance of the game. He had given up every other design and expectation to the attendance on a capricious old man, whom he saw had one by one discarded those who had more natural right to his favour; he foresaw his own fate from the least cross incident; and he was not long before he discover'd what it was that he who now possess'd the fortune could least bear. To assiduity and attention he added a humility of deportment which would not suffer a suspicion of what the old lord dreaded to have live in his thoughts. He was diligent as a servant, tender as a wife, and careful as an unprovided mistress whose
affluence

affluence was to perish with the life of him on whom she depended. As the infirmities of nature increased on the old man his attendant grew more necessary; and as he appear'd not only satisfy'd but grateful for every addition he occasionally talk'd of making to what he should bequeath him, he grew satisfied that he had one about him who had no expectations of taking his place; and whose interest it would be to preserve his life, as he continued to make him greater and greater additions to his pretended legacy.

Such was the life of the old lord to the time of his last sickness, in which none was suffer'd to attend him but Arrius. The hand of the grateful Arrius must reach him food and medicines, and he kept up the security of his life being valuable to him by the continued farce of adding to his will in his favour. He died in his arms. The sons enter'd the house on the instant of the news. The nephew thrust them by to claim the breaking up the will. A favourite is generally hated from the highest to the lowest of the family: servants were in league against Arrius with the sons and with the nephew, each of whom expected, in spite of all the perverseness

verseness of the old man's disposition, to be his heir, and to laugh at the empty affiduities of the new adopted. The parties were brought together, the will was produced, and when open'd none was so much surpris'd as Arrius, who found himself the heir. The eldest son had an empty title, the second a very moderate annuity, and the nephew not a sixpence.

They were leaving the house together when Arrius call'd them back ; he told them he had no more expectation of what he found himself possess'd of than he had right to it ; ‘ As much less than this, said he would have equal'd my utmost ambition a quarter of an hour ago, I will forget that fortune which might have disappointed even those expectations, has more than fulfill'd them. I shall not take the advantage of what perhaps was rather obstinacy than hatred in my dead patron ; but, as there is enough for all of us, I will submit to the dividing it among us, only giving a double share where the title has fallen. After this, concluded he, let us live in friendship, and I shall be happier with my part, obtained with the approbation of those who had more right, than I could be
‘ with

‘ with the whole possess’d to the ruin of
‘ my relations.’

Hearts themselves incapable of the principles of honour, are not easily brought to believe they can exist in others. The vices and foibles of the old lord were hereditary. Suspicion took the place of gratitude in his descendants, and revenge of the injury that had been offer’d them against the innocent, drown’d all thoughts of acquiescing in what was so infinitely more than they could have expected. They stared upon one another at the offer; they consulted about it in private; they call’d the servants together and question’d them a thousand ways. Incapable of supposing justice and generosity the motives to Arrius’s conduct, they concluded he was giving up the greater part to secure what he reserved to himself; they disputed the right which had been given him to the whole; and as evidences generally attest what serves the purposes of those in whose cause they are retain’d, the people of the family were soon brought to declare that they saw Arrius burn a paper when he was sent by the dying lord to his esquire; that they heard him say with his
last

last breath, that this which Arrius now produced was not his last will ; and that if he could have lived to dictate another, the elder son, so ran the testimony on the one part ; and the nephew, so swore the others, was to have been the heir. It was in vain that the date of this will was too late to leave a supposition of another ; in vain that the clergyman and the physician who attended at the bedside declared against all the assertions of the servants. Law-suits were commenced, and after five years, when a very considerable portion of the inheritance had been sacrificed to the courts, and there was no appearance of the rest going other than the same way ; it was agreed that what remained should be divided according to the first proposal of the person who had a right to the whole.

As Flavio had been the last favourite with the dead lord, it was he whom every body supposed most able to give lights into the conduct of Arrius ; he had, during the course of the law-suit, persecuted the common antagonist with continued aspersions. Suspicion had arisen after suspicion, charge after charge ; and at one time, as he found those in the house ready
to

to join with him in any accusation, and to swear whatever he should suspect, he had charg'd him with poisoning his dead friend. The depositions were taken in form; the victim to the treachery was dragg'd before a magistrate; and so punctual and so positive were the assertions against him, that nothing but the testimony of his physician could have alarm'd the magistrate with but a possibility of his innocence: nothing but the address of the most able man that ever fill'd that important office could have got through the conspiracy and releas'd him. The questions which had been hitherto ask'd were general; suspicion now wak'd the justice to a new attention. He found, though they agreed in these they differ'd in all that were more particular: he was at the pains to produce all their contradictions; he spoke as he ought on the occasion, and was surpris'd to see the readiness with which the accused forgave the author of the charge. The law-suit had not continued a long time after this; but during the whole course of it, and at the conclusion, in their mutual agreement, Arrius, who had all along attributed not only the false claims of the rest, but even the attempt of Flavio upon his life,

life, to disappointment and vexation, rather than to a resolute malice, had treated them all with gentleness, and with the respect due to the descendants of a family to whom he ow'd his fortune : and, with the principle of conquering ill with good, had singled out Flavio for his particular favour.

Few hearts themselves not liable to the heavier frailties have been ready to see them with indulgence and candour in others ; but this was a virtue very eminent in that of Arrius ; he had accustomed himself to look up to causes in order to determine on their effects ; and while he consider'd the provocations which his persecutors lay under, though not immediately from him, he mitigated the sentence which otherwise would have been demanded against their attempts by a sense of the circumstances under which they were designed.

Such was Arrius, who in the honesty of his heart had awaken'd the suspicion of his unhappy friend in the wrong place, who had been indefatigable, though not successful, in preventing the consequences of the error so soon as he had discover'd it,

it, and who had at this time concerns of his own that demanded an equal attention. The fortune he had sat down with, though considerably less than what his own candour had originally decreed him, was not inconsiderable. The being upon terms of friendship with the family had been one of the articles of the treaty; and there was none with whom he had made a point of it to be well with so much as Flavio, whose hopes he had immediately disappointed: to the others he thought himself less connected, as they had been supplanted before. Flavio and Arrius lived near one another, they visited, and there was the appearance on the one side of that of which there was a reality on the other, a perfect friendship. Arrius had at this time a friend, an acquaintance from childhood, a man of honour and of merit, of many great qualities, and of such as would have recommended him most to Arrius without the advantage of their early intimacy, because they were most like his own. Every man has some ruling passion in his breast: ambition was that of the friend of Arrius; he had made his way to the minister; he paid his court with the most punctual assiduity; his claims were a secret, but every body

body had supposed them of an important kind, and his interest had engaged many in his favour. The family of Arrius was not without its influence: he had early used all his own power in favour of the unknown designs of his friend. He had engaged the brothers in the same cause, so far as the cold correspondence they kept together admitted; he had their promise; but from Flavio he had greater expectations: he looked on Flavio as a man bound to him by the strongest ties; as one whose heart he had conquered by good offices; and as he esteemed him a convert to his virtues, rather than a friend to his person, he supposed him incapable of alienation. Ignorant of the badness of the human heart, he deluded himself, by supposing the worst of tempers like the best.

Flavio had joined, so far as words and looks would declare it, his interest with that of Arrius in favour of the man whose cause he espoused: he had influenced all in his way; he had spoke with warmth; he had written in his favour. Arrius was deceived into an opinion of his perfect friendship, and had introduced him to the person who
had

had been so much obliged to his good offices. This was the point at which the subtle Flavio aim'd. The rancour of his heart was hidden only, not obliterated: he had meditated a thousand methods of destroying the man to whose generous friendship he had such infinite obligations; and he had seized on this as one of the incidents which might possibly give him an opportunity of mischief. Whatever were the pretensions of the friend of Arrius, they were a secret even to those on whom he most relied. Inquisitiveness was the foible of Arrius's temper, but generosity of sentiment was superior to all its weaknesses. Tho' he was eager to know the nature of the design, the services which might have given a pretence for his asking what it was, gave him a reserve on that head, greater than he would have had if a stranger. Flavio, who knew this to be the point on which the friend was most tender, had often hinted Arrius's impatience to know it, but his own conduct had uniformly contradicted this, though it contradicted his heart at the same time.

People

People who are acquainted with a court know, that men, in their several stations there, are guided by one another; and that there is more probability of success from the good offices of an inferior, who has the opportunities of persuading, than of a superior who may, but who will be very difficultly brought to command. It is on this principle that the levee of a third rate favourite is more assiduously followed by the men of design than that of the monarch; and that court is paid by the wise to a dependant on a dependant, while those who are not in the secret dangle to no purpose after the sovereign. Arrius had the honour of the minister's acquaintance, but he had the intimacy of the minister's minister. It was by his means that he wrought with his utmost address into his favour; and Flavio, whom he esteemed a second self, was in this, among the rest of his secrets. Flavio had been introduced to this man of interest; he had joined the tribute of praise which Arrius had paid to his friend's name as often as it was mentioned; and as there is at once a necessity of engaging the services of persons

sons of this rank by the most persuasive of all arguments, and of doing this with address and secrecy, as well as with decency, Flavio had been the person entrusted with the five hundred, at the price of which Arrius insur'd this gentleman's good offices, which he would not suffer the man who was to profit of them to suppose the them result of any thing more than his friendship. Tho' Arrius had been reserved in his enquiries of his friend, he had not been able to suppress his natural curiosity in his conversations, either with the minister, or with this his agent; he had been eternally leading them into the subject, and Flavio had been present at many of their evasions in the place of answers. If there had been any crime in this, Arrius could not have been guilty of it: if he could have been guilty of a crime, so perfect was his confidence in Flavio, he would not have doubted to entrust him with the secret.

Flavio saw his power: he saw the reserve on the part of the friend; though impatient to be informed on that of Arrius, he had been entrusted in scenes which it was easy for him to misrepresent,
and

and he saw the means of mischief in abundance before him. The serpent which had been so long seal'd up within his breast, began to unfold and threaten; he considered his whole plan before he began to put the least part of it in execution; and when he saw a prospect of success he put the match to the train: if there be a passion in which men are more jealous than in love, it is ambition. The desires are as fierce, and the object is greater. The Friend of Arrius was in the height of the pursuit; and, as in love the ears are open to every tale that would create suspicions, and most greedily receive those which affect such as least deserve to be suspected; in the same manner this other infatuation opens every passage to fear, while the object appears too great for confidence. From visiting the man of design in company with Arrius, Flavio made the way easy to his seeing him alone; from the profusion of his protestations he found a way open to his credit. Tho' he must have hated every thing that belonged to Arrius; tho', if the virtues of this friend of his pretended friend had not raised all hostile passions in the heart of one actuated by principles exactly contrary

trary, the sense of Arrius's wishing him success would have been sufficient cause for his employing all the artillery of fraud or force to prevent it; yet here there was a consideration that took the place of all. While Arrius might be made the principal, it was below the dignity of his revenge to stoop to secondary attempts; while Arrius might himself be injured, there was pleasure even in the prosperity of his friend that led the way to it.

Unsuspecting of the rancour of Flavio's heart, the friend received him as one whom the interest of that worthy man had engaged in his cause: he found him able to promote his success in a very high degree; he had proof that his inclination was not second to his power. Flavio introduced him to every friend he had; the apparent generosity with which he did this, insured, at once, the warmest Assistances of those to whom he recommended him, and his own highest gratitude. The minister found half the people of interest engaged in the cause of a man whose abilities had recommended him, when almost a stranger: he was glad to find he had an opportunity of indulging his own

desires to reward the deserving, and at the same time obliging those who had a right to expect it; an incident as rare among the great, as the first principle of it among ministers. He received his proposals with a smile; he promised to be what statesmen seldom are to those who have no interest, a real friend; and he made the promise with a resolution to keep it.

It was now that the designing Flavio found his time to execute his purpose: impatient under the delay, though too confident for suspicion, the friend was waiting his fortune: Flavio pushed his interest; he wondered at the backwardness of the minister; he accused the people whom he had engaged of being remiss; and, after a thousand vain pretences as to the occasion of the delay, every body, at all acquainted with the slow motions of those in power, could have seen to be natural; he asked him, with an air of great disturbance as well as great importance, whether he did not suspect some person of undermining him. ‘ For my own part, ‘ sir, said he, though I came into this ‘ cause a second, since I have had the ‘ honour of your acquaintance I have engaged in it as a principal; I could have ‘ thought

‘ thought my interest alone secure against
 ‘ a neglect of this kind, and so would
 ‘ many of those whom I have engaged
 ‘ in your favour. Something must be
 ‘ amiss; somebody must have thrown
 ‘ cold water on the design. Your preten-
 ‘ sions, continued the insinuating friend,
 ‘ are founded on some secret service: far
 ‘ be it from me to enquire into the nature
 ‘ of it: you will not accuse me of a thought
 ‘ that has looked that way: services that
 ‘ are not disinterested are the worst kind
 ‘ of slavery. Will you hear me? the mi-
 ‘ nistry will be glad of being served;
 ‘ they will be ready to reward those who
 ‘ serve them: but, sir, they would rather
 ‘ that service should come from men of
 ‘ interest than from strangers; they had
 ‘ rather those rewards should have for
 ‘ their object a man who may continue to
 ‘ be useful, than one who will suppose
 ‘ they have only compensated his past
 ‘ services: let me be plain with you,
 ‘ you seem, in the integrity of your own
 ‘ heart, to entertain no suspicion of
 ‘ others; you are not used to courts;
 ‘ perhaps you are not sensible, that under
 ‘ the cloak of all that disinterested virtue
 ‘ Arrius,’—The friend started at the
 ‘ name; the subtle accuser saw the horror

of the first reception of the hint soften into uncertainty and doubt, and he proceeded. ‘ Arrius, I say, is of all men
‘ the most devoted to ambition: he hides
‘ the mine till it burst into explosion;
‘ but, be assured, the ministry is not
‘ above the reach of his hopes; nor, to
‘ confess the truth, above the execution
‘ of his talents. A man must rise by de-
‘ grees to such an eminence; he must
‘ occupy and abandon a number of
‘ posts in succession. What if even his
‘ friendship should give way for a time
‘ to his larger views; and the post which
‘ you expect should be the first of his at-
‘ tempts, and your secret the means of his
‘ arriving at it’—‘ I would not suspect,
‘ concluded Flavio, that he intends to
‘ keep what he should gain by this little
‘ perfidy; his views are higher; he
‘ knows he shall succeed in them, and,
‘ I would almost swear, he intends you
‘ all that you are now aiming at, only
‘ that he would have it first serve his
‘ own purposes.’

Who would not have been led into suspicion by an harangue so artfully conducted? – The tool to Flavio’s treachery was silent for some moments; he was
unwilling

unwilling to suspect human nature of so much perfidy; and he would have thought the whole species of mankind capable of becoming false rather than Arrius: but yet it appeared incontestible. Who was it that had given him the suspicion? the friend of Arrius, but the friend also of truth. He weighed every circumstance, but the jaundiced eye saw every thing yellow; his mind was tainted, and he saw every object coloured by the infection. ‘ I would neither be credulous, said he, nor blind.—Sir, I owe every thing to your friendship; I beg you to continue the generous office, and as you have raised my suspicions, to confirm them, if you have more than conjecture on this subject; I beg you to give words to the certainty. I cannot thank you as I ought for what you have already done for me, but my heart shall entertain a gratitude equal even to this.’ ‘ What I suspect, said Flavio deliberately and carefully, is, that Arrius will, from his intimacy with you, learn the nature of those services on which you formed your expectations, and that his next step will be the offering to do them. His power and interest will make the ministry rejoice in obliging him, and he

‘ will think he does the office of a patron,
‘ if he provide for you in his list of
‘ friends; for I know Arrius too well to
‘ suspect he would desert you!’—‘ Has he
‘ never, continued Flavio, endeavoured
‘ to get the secret from you?’ ‘ Never,
‘ reply’d the friend with earnestness!—but,
‘ on recollection, a thousand unlucky
‘ circumstances concur’d to favour the
‘ suspicion.’ A busy inquisitiveness was, as
has been observed, the ruling folly in
Arrius’s disposition. Though he had
checked all immediate efforts in this affair
of his friend, it was not to be supposed he
could suppress the thousand distant hints
that his heart would dictate. The friend,
who had neglected them as they occurred;
now remembered them all. The gene-
rous friendship, as it appeared, of Flavio,
had claimed, had conquered his whole
heart: he made him the confidant of
his new suspicions; and with this use-
ful assistant he soon found, that all the
pretended disinterestedness and unconcern,
as to the nature of the service, had been
put on, the better to conceal these subtle
attempts to discover it. When a suspi-
cion is once on foot every thing streng-
thens it. It now appeared that artifice
had been in every step which Arrius had
taken

taken in his favour ; that the interest he had employed, the importance he had given to the nature of the claim, and the promises he had obtained for a reward to the person from whom the thing should be communicated, were all intended in his own favour ; that he had been pleading his own cause, under the pretext of friendship, and had used that only as a more honourable principle, in favour of which to be warm, than his own immediate interest, had it appeared as such. The very backwardness with which he had always conversed with his friend on this subject, was call'd in to assist at his condemnation ; and it was agreed, that he could not have used the discovery, had it been made to him in confidence, and that he therefore had avoided that, while he was using all his artifice and industry to get the secret, by means which could not so obviously contradict his using it to his own purposes.

When suspicion is awake, a thousand things may be said with advantage, which before would have been rejected with the utmost disdain : trifles were now drawn in from all quarters to countenance the suspicion ; and Flavio did not part with the creature of his purposes, till he had

endear'd himself still farther by new services, and engag'd him to perfect silence; to the rejecting of but a look of doubt, till what was at present the subject of it, should lose that name in certainty.

The person employed against the generous and open Arrius was of all men the most violent in his passions: he had devoted the whole purposes of his soul to the scheme in which he now saw the traitor Arrius; so he thought him, endeavouring basely to supplant him. He could no way obey the injunctions of Flavio, but by avoiding the sight of the person whom they condemned. He now hunted Flavio for new matter of suspicion; they tortured the most innocent accidents into meanings of which nothing but jealousy could have rendered them capable; nor was there a word or a look of Arrius's, which was either now seen or could be recollected, that was not made an assistant. It had been the address of Flavio to begin his work on nothing; all that had been hitherto urged against Arrius wanted even appearance, except what the address of one and the jealousy of the other gave to it. What had been begun with such weak materials, it was evident
might

might be supported by stronger; and the man whom Flavio had found ready to fire without provocation, he could not doubt eager to seize but on the pretext of it.

Arrius, tho' he had been reserved in his enquiries of his friend, had been unable to suppress his curiosity among others; he had never talked with any of those friends whom he had interested in his cause, without expressing his wonder at what could be the thing he had to offer to the ministry. This Flavio knew; but it was not till now his time to call it into use. He had the friend of Arrius for ever at his house: as the persons who had been engaged in the cause were their common friends, he found means to get them one by one into company with the person whose interest they had espoused: he always took occasion to mention the friendship of Arrius to the person, and to throw in hints, which produced, from every one of them, a confirmation of the great pain he was in to discover the nature of the thing which had engaged his patronage.

When a jealousy is formed, every thing gives strength to it. What would have been, under other circumstances, heard as

it was spoken, as mere matter of idle curiosity, was now received as plot and design: there was no doubting what so many disinterested persons confirmed; and Arrius was given up by the man to whose confidence, to whose gratitude, he had all the ties that friendship and services could give.

The good offices of the minister still were at a stand; but every thing else that concerned the fortune of the abused friend of Arrius was in motion. He avoided the man to whom he ought to have explained himself, and whose innocence would have cur'd his doubts in an instant. 'Tis thus we carry, thro' our own perverseness, diseases and torments about us, the remedies of which are every moment in our power. 'Tis thus we sacrifice, to credulity or obstinacy, not only our own peace and interest, but that of those whom we esteem. While Arrius was shunn'd, Flavio was courted. While the friend declin'd visiting him, the accuser continued his acquaintance; and represented as he pleased the consequences of their meetings. Whatever could increase the suspicion, was invented; whatever he invented, was believed.

Flavio

Flavio now saw the misguided friend ready for any mischief, and he determined to give the finishing blow to his conspiracy. He was in his closet one evening when the subject of his treachery called; he received him there; they were alone, and Flavio appear'd more than ordinarily thoughtful. ‘Are you confirmed, said he very earnestly, in your opinion that Arrius is your enemy? You have another. Wonder at what I am saying, but I am such. I have been treacherous to you; I will not say as he has, because I was but his instrument; nor indeed was my fault so great, because I had not then professed myself your friend.’ The person to whom he addressed this, stood silent with amazement, and he continued. ‘I confess I have acted basely by you, but I have compensated for it by my services since. You will wonder what has fixed me so perfectly, and engaged me so eagerly in your interest: you must have seen there was more in than common friendship; it was to atone for the injury I at first offered to you. I would have kept this a secret, continued Flavio, but it is no longer possible. Your fortune depends on

‘ your instant exerting yourself, and
‘ you cannot do it properly, without
‘ knowing the obstacles you have to sur-
‘ mount.

The astonish’d friend had not words to beg him to go on, but his eyes spoke the entreaty, and Flavio proceeded:
‘ To-morrow the reward is to be given
‘ to your services; the post is vacant;
‘ the order is obtained: but to whom is
‘ it to be given? While you are trifling
‘ here, Arrius is soliciting it at the mi-
‘ nister’s. He knows your plan; he
‘ purposes its execution; and he is this
‘ this instant claiming the reward of
‘ your services. The friend had never
till this moment doubted; nor was it
any favourable thought of Arrius that
now produced the hesitation. ‘ I am
‘ still diffident of my ill fortune, con-
‘ tinued he, because I know not how
‘ Arrius could come at a secret with
‘ which I intrusted no one except the
‘ the minister.’ ‘ That, reply’d Flavio,
‘ is my crime. I have been the agent,
‘ the instrument of this treachery; and
‘ I deserve, said he, reaching out a pi-
stol, and delivering it into the hands of
the astonished friend, ‘ to die for it. I
‘ confess

‘ confess that I deserve it, and I expect
 ‘ your resentment.’ Entreaties for an
 explanation were all that the man whom
 he had thus wrought to the height of
 despair and of revenge could utter.
 ‘ Let that paper tell you, reply’d Flavio.
 ‘ What the minister knows is no secret
 ‘ to his favourite. I purchased that, on
 ‘ which your fortune depended, of the
 ‘ man with whom you first saw me, for
 ‘ five hundred pounds: the money was
 ‘ Arrius’s; the service Arrius’s; you
 ‘ will see in that letter his thanks for
 ‘ the successful manner of my giving
 ‘ the price of infamy; and here, con-
 ‘ tinued he, putting into his hand ano-
 ‘ ther letter, here is a promise of all
 ‘ the services of the person who receiv’d
 ‘ it, which he owns purchased at a price
 ‘ higher than they deserved.

‘ It was this act of perfidy, continued
 ‘ he, that I have been at all this pains
 ‘ to atone; but as my endeavours have
 ‘ been vain, I submit to the punishment
 ‘ I deserve. I have, concluded he, in-
 ‘ jured you so deeply as to justify any
 ‘ resentment, but I have that consciouf-
 ‘ ness of my guilt, that I cannot lift up
 ‘ my hand against you: spare the cere-
 money

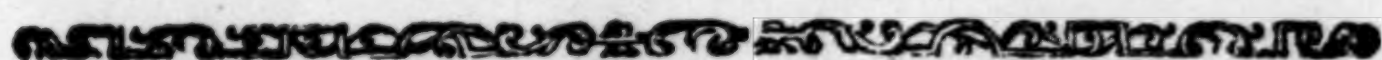
‘mony of the satisfaction, and take it
‘as it is offered.’

Flavio knew sufficiently what would be the effect of this harangue. The supposed injur’d pardon’d him, thanked him, embraced him with the utmost tenderness, and concealed the resolution which the other knew he must have made. While they were in the height of their reconciliation a letter was delivered to Flavio: he had given a secret signal for its being brought in, and was sufficiently informed of its contents. He had no sooner cast his eye on it than he delivered it to the person whom he had thus prepared for it. It brought him news that his friend had succeeded with the minister; that Arrius supped with him that night, and that the patent for the post was made out in his favour, with a reversionary grant to the person whom he had introduced on the occasion.

If the surprize of the deluded man had been before too great for words, his rage now submitted to an equal silence. He watched the door of the minister. He saw his friend brought out; he stopp’d the chair; he engaged Arrius to walk to
a few

CHARACTERS. III

a few paces distance with him. He shot him thro' the head. And snatching out of his hand, as he fell, a paper, which he had been all this time holding out to him, he found it to be the patent, but he found in it no name beside his own.



HISTORY VII.

THE friend, the murtherer of the unhappy Arrius, took with him into that voluntary exile, by which he avoided a severer sentence from the laws, an only daughter. Mira was at that time thirteen; of a promising person and understanding; gay, thoughtless, idle, and full of prate; more a girl than girls usually are: the reserve of an English education would have improved her into a sprightly woman;—No more; she fell into the hands of a nation, for her first rudiments, which would make a coquet almost of the gravest natural disposition: her father had been requested to send her back; but he had been fond of the mother, who lived again in the little Mira: he found the loss of friends and country insupportable; the
loss

loss of innocence more so; all that he could preserve was this little companion, and tho' he sacrificed her interest to his indulgence, he would not part with her. How often is it that we love for our own sakes alone, those whom we pretend to be, nay whom we persuade ourselves, that we are most fond of.

France was the nation of the world which the spirited young creature could have found the whole sex girls and spirited. She was charmed to find herself in a place where every one was as lively, as wild, and as much a girl as herself. She loved all she became acquainted with, and the fondness was returned by every body. At thirteen we have very few ideas; it is at that time we begin to acquire them. What little of the manner of her country Mira had, she disliked, and she soon forgot it. She adopted every thing that was French by sixteen; she spoke the language, she thought the system, and she had the manner of the country. Had she not been heir to that beauty which only the English possess, none could have supposed her other than a Frenchwoman.

The French have that regard for honourable resentment, that they reverence the man who flies to them on the account of a successful decision: they see the custom of duelling in a more favoured light, because it is so severely prohibited among themselves; and there are not wanting those, who think the liberty given on this occasion, by the connivance of our laws, one of the most favourable circumstances in the English constitution. The father of Mira had not been so much his own enemy as to explain any of the circumstances of the death of his friend, either as to the occasion or the manner of it: he acknowledged that he had fled, because he had killed his man, and it was not doubted but this had been done fairly. It was plain that he lamented, through his life, the person who had fallen by his hand, and the generosity was understood as much in his favour as his courage. The natural disposition of this unhappy man was full of sweetness; his manners affable and pleasing: if he had once been too hasty and exceptionous, the incident which had banished him, and had inflicted in its remembrance a much heavier punishment than

than exile, had thoroughly cured him of that fault. His amiable qualities would at any time have set him in a favourable situation with men of sense ; but the veil which his sorrow threw over them, shew'd them now in a more engaging light. We have a natural tenderness for what we pity ; but when we compassionate that which has a right to our esteem, the sensation becomes a mixture of love and reverence. The Englishman, who must have been respected every where, found this additional plea for the civilities of a polite nation so powerful in his favour, that there was not a person, he could wish to know, who did not court his acquaintance. The first of the nobility visited at his house ; the princes of the blood received him at theirs ; and even interest joined with generosity of sentiment to render him acceptable ; he had acquir'd so much knowledge of the affairs of our government, during his attendance on the minister and his friends, that the statesmen were happy if they could throw themselves in his way, and lead him into a conversation on the subject.

While the father of Mira was thus received, thus esteemed, thus carefs'd, she
who

who must independently of all connections and assistances have strongly recommended herself, shared the attention and regard of the country which received her. Her age grew toward that of woman; her figure was beyond all France had seen; her face a miracle. Every man swore nature had denied eyes to all women but Mira; and when her understanding was the subject, every man shew'd the depth of his own by the highest of her praises. The Belle Anglois was the universal toast. Every man bespoke her for a wife; every man wish'd the trifling might come to earnest. While the men were devoted to their compliments, the women made it a point to form the manners of the little fugitive; the English orphan found a thousand mothers; and a readiness of apprehension and familiarity of disposition render'd their admonitions easy: she copy'd, she adopted their manner, and she became the veryest coquette in nature. We have a false and foolish partiality which makes us see with some kind of approbation this levity in any woman; but where it was accompanied with all the graces, and indeed with all the virtues that have power to charm in woman, 'tis not a wonder every

every body was captivated by it. Mira was courted by every body, and she received every body that courted her. She curtsied to their civilities; she smil'd at their compliments; every sigh was answer'd with a laugh; but then it was a laugh in which the pleasantry had no mixture of insolence: and to the man who sollicitated her heart, the answer always was, ' 'Tis free and disengag'd; you have my leave to try what you can do against it; if you can win it wear it; but if not, blame your own want of charms, not my ingratitude.' Who is there would hear this and not assure himself of success? the vanity of every man sets every woman in his power whom he has the leave to attempt; and perhaps it was only owing to the multiplicity of lovers, which this declaration brought about the lady, that she was able to resist them all. One furnish'd her with arms against another, and as she saw none so deserving that she could not have added something from another which would have heighten'd the charm, she still saw an ideal form in her mind's eye, a man made up like the Venus of the ancient painter, from all the several beauties of the

the

the most accomplish'd of her lovers, which rival'd every one of them.

We esteem those faces the most which improve upon a nearer and a frequent view. This was of all women's most the case in Mira's. This is a charm peculiar, indeed, to the graces which nature gives. If the best art that means to improve her has its effect at a distance, it languishes on a nearer view. Mira, to the advantage of the best complexion nature ever gave a woman, had the peculiar fortune of shewing it among women to whom nature is not suffer'd to give any complexion at all. In France all the ladies paint; they do not affect to hide it; they think they compliment the person whom they visit in proportion to the depth of the red which they lay on. They have the art of making very happy faces for candle-light and a little distance; but with the morning enters ugliness. See them at an opera, and they are all pretty; see them at the Thuilleries, and you have a distaste for them all; they are all alike handsome and blooming in an evening, all alike decay'd and hagg'd in a morning: neither at the play nor at her toilette can you well distinguish a French-woman

woman of fourteen from a Frenchwoman of fourscore.

There had not been wanting among the women of fashion who patronised the blooming Mira, those who had urged her to heighten the red on her cheeks, or give a pearly tinge to the white of such a neck as even England has only once in an age or two: perhaps there had not been wanting one among them all to admire it. What absolute good-nature began, envy procured them to urge afterwards: every woman who had herself pretensions to beauty wanted to reduce this Helen of the West, to a level with other human creatures; but they pleaded, they advised, they entreated in vain. 'Tis true, that no woman made so little figure in public on an evening as Mira, though with more bloom upon her cheeks than almost any human creature ever possess'd. We have seen her eclipsed by a coquette of fifty in the box; but we need only see her of a morning, to see every thing else eclipsed that had the best pretensions to charming. We see it on the stage with us, where all the performers paint, that if the finest complexion in the world attempts to shew it-
self

self without that addition, it looks dead : and 'tis so there in the boxes. Those who could say angel to the beauties of their own country over night, sigh'd out goddess at the feet of the English coquette in the morning : those who were in raptures with others at a distance, felt extacy when they conversed with her near. The living bloom, the eloquent flesh of the young foreigner represented her as the only real beauty, and it became taste to acknowledge her pretensions.

Among us a handsome woman appears a kind of public property : every man thinks he has a right to his share of admiration ; and as every one of the ten thousand who sigh for her cannot be happy, they think it a kind of monopoly, and will hardly suffer any one to suppose he has a right to rob the public. 'Tis to this spirit in the generality, not to any neglect of the charms which we profess to admire, that the celebrated beauties among us seldom are married, 'till they cease to be so ; that the *shew things*, as they call themselves, *never go off*. In France true gallantry is confined to the women. A handsome man is courted, caress'd and flatter'd there, as much as a beauty

beauty of the other sex with us, and they are as averse to his marrying ; they look upon these happy fellows as public benefits, and measure the degree of their own charms by the notice which such a one takes of them.

There are generally in Paris fifty of these elegant fellows ; but as we lately saw a period in which two beauties robb'd every other face of that title, so the character of the agreeable was at this period engross'd in France by one man. Whenever Bertueil appear'd, every other claim to attention vanish'd. Bertueil had all the glances, all the regard ; the remote disputed who should curtsy first to him ; the nearer lean'd over one another to whisper nothing to him. When he came into the opera the whole theatre rose ; if he appear'd in the walks every body turn'd to meet him ; if his coach was coming along the street, that of every woman of taste stopp'd that he might drive by ; if he visited by appointment, all the women of fashion crowded into the palais ; and dutchesses, as once in England, drank tea in the garrets : it was enough to say they had been at the route where Bertueil was. Allowances must be made for

for the genius of different nations, before an Englishwoman will be brought to believe this; but such is the spirit, such the freedom and coquetry of the French, that there usually are half a dozen of these people at every publick place you shall frequent there. It is with great difficulty that the French will bring themselves to give up but one, out of a number of these common flames, to marriage; that they should ever have parted with the single Bertueil was not to be conceived. Weary'd out with seeing the admiration of the whole sex paid to one stranger, and conscious that none of all who had attempted her had any chance to marry her, they determined however on the dear purchase, and let loose Bertueil to her.

It is always the policy of the unmarried in France to sacrifice some one of these objects of general admiration to the taking off a rival who is too powerful; but the giving up of all was a crisis to which they had never been reduced. Bertueil had long been all; he had monopolized that title which had been used to be diffused among numbers. The resolution was difficult. The men who

hoped to shew their claim to the attention of the female world, when he should be withdrawn, all joined in it. But to confess a truth, Bertueil had already fallen into the same box with Mira, and had desired leave to wait on her in the morning. It was less difficult to sacrifice that in which they had no right, and but for the sense that it would happen, whether they acquiesced in it or not, perhaps they had never acquiesced in it. What could not be obviated had the sanction of a matter of choice. Four of the women of greatest rank introduced the gallant, and gave him such a character to the father, as made his way easy into the family. It must be allowed, that the women in France envy'd Mira; but the same passion has different attendants in different countries. In England women always hate the person whom they envy, and depreciate that which they cannot bear to hear others commend: in France it is much otherwise. The beauties wished to have so formidable a rival out of the way, but they wished to see her happy while she left them opportunities to charm.

What

What was the revolution in the world of beaux among the French ; who, or how many supply'd the place of Bertueil ; or what happy fair one carry'd the prize given up by the fair Englishwoman, after this time, is not our business to enquire. Mira saw Bertueil. To see him and to admire him was, to a woman who had eyes and a heart, the same thing. Mira confess'd that she found in him that ideal beauty which had supplanted all the others in her imagination cloath'd with flesh and blood : Bertueil had taste ; he admir'd, he ador'd, and he marry'd Mira.

'Tis odd that there should be any merit in constancy, where any change must be for the worse ; yet such is the depravity of human nature, that we see variety take the place of charms, in the minds of the most sensible people ; and hear every day of the husbands of beauties, and the mistresses of the most agreeable and accomplish'd, falsifying their oaths, and injuring the partners of their hearts, with the meanest and most unworthy. 'Tis from this depravity of the mind, in the generality of the human species,

species, that fidelity in marriage, even where there is no temptation to the change, acquires its praise : but whatever merit there may be in it, none have boasted a more perfect claim to the honours of it than this amiable pair. Where love has its foundation in reason it improves, not abates, on intimacy ; when the singularities of the temper of the one party happen to be the same with those of the other, the very foibles on both sides tie the knot more firm, and the chain remains unbroken. Bertueil had been complimented into a coxcomb, while Mira had been courted into a coquette. They both continued to receive the adoration of the different sexes, and the consequences were continu'd. Every man of spirit addressed the wife ; every woman of distinction received the civilities of the husband ; but the heart, the affections, and the inclinations, remained on both sides unshaken. Mira would sum up the conquests of the day, and allow every man a greater degree of merit as he approached towards a resemblance of her husband. Bertueil would compliment the most deserving of his mistresses, by finding something in which she resembled

bled

bled his Mira. Gallantry was the spirit of both; intrigue was below the consideration of either: an ambition to charm universally reign'd in the breast of each; jealousy had a place in neither.

The fortune of Bertueil was considerable; the alliances of his family of the highest kind: all France were the friends and intimates of the one or the other of the family; for the father, at their request, liv'd in the house with them, and the same discernment and generosity of mind, which led people to admire the bride and bridegroom, commanded esteem and reverence for him. In all the time they made France happy by their residence in it, there was not an attempt upon the honour of Mira, or upon the faith of Bertueil; and what is more strange, as well as more happy, there was not on either side a suspicion that there could have been, or that, if there had, there was a possibility of its succeeding. It was with tears of joy the father received notice at length from England, that the nearest relation of Arrius was dead, and that such means had been used that he might return with safety. It was with tears of reluctance

that Mira left a country in which she had received so many civilities ; to which she owed so much happiness. Bertueil was eager to see the famous England, and the resolution was soon taken that the family would not separate. It was ten years that the father of Mira had been absent ; it was four since the time of her marriage. There was a pleasure in her imagination on the seeing a country which had claim to her affection as the place of her birth, and which had all that charm of novelty to her that it had for her happy husband. They settled their affairs and left France, without a determination whether they should or should not return to it. Flavio was yet alive : the man who contrives the mischief, is always he who is most violent against the person who has executed it : partly from this curs'd disposition of curs'd minds ; partly from the care of his own character, he had been the most violent in his exclamation against the murderer. When the unhappy instrument of his baseness arrived in town, Flavio, conscious that, for many reasons, the same country was no place of residence for both of them, driven partly by

by shame, partly by fear, the constant attendant of perfidy, left the kingdom.

What he did of injury to the character of the unhappy father of Mira in France, whither he retired, his flight retrieved in England. It was a good exchange on the part of the unfortunate, to have the censure change place when he arrived, where it had been most severe: he did not omit to tell the story as it was. He had early in his misfortune, though too late to be of service to him, discovered the monstrous baseness of Flavio: he declared it. Men pity'd and honour'd, whom they had been used to see in the light of an Assassin; and the infamy that pursued Flavio to France, set those right who had been shocked at the first accounts of a man who had told them, they ought to hate one whom they had been used to honour.

'Tis thus innocence, though plunged into the act of guilt, while free from the intention, will at one time clear itself to the world. There is a sort of moral justice executed by the very concurrence of accidents; and as the exile of this unhappy man was a proper punishment for his

crime, seen even in the most favourable light, the ignominy which pursued Flavio, and forced him, after various changes of place, at length, to throw off the very name to which he found it adhered indelibly, was a sentence almost rigorous enough for his fault. Could he have foreseen the pain and infamy that would have followed him throughout Europe, death had been a worthy alternative for so shameful an exile.

If the father of our beauty was now as well received in England as he had been in France, it was otherwise with herself. We have a foolish partiality for the manners of our own country, which renders those of others ridiculous in our opinion. It is to be confess'd, that the French behaviour, as we see it copy'd by our own women of imitative genius and weak understandings, who have spent a summer there; or by our beaux of no genius or understanding at all, who have gallopp'd through the country in their tour, deserves all the contempt with which we treat it: but this was not the case, in what offered in the address and manner of this accomplished pair. If we can shake off the narrow chains of partiality, we must confess

self there is an ease in the manner of the French, a politeness in their address, and a spirit in their conversation, which sets the formal gravity of our own natural and national turn in a very disadvantageous light. All that is agreeable in the French deportment appeared under its most agreeable form in this accomplished pair. Mira, whose natural disposition was French, though she had received it on English ground, whose ideas were all acquired in France, and whose conversation, address, and manner had been all acquired in that country, was not a travell'd Englishwoman, but a very French beauty: as to Bertueil, he inherited all that is characteristic in his nation in an acknowledged eminence. Whether it were real national partiality, or that hatred, which attends on an object too high for emulation, that occasioned it, the people who had charmed universally among the most elegant judges, were received here as fantastic and extravagant. The beaux who had equipp'd themselves after the petit maitres of Versailles, and by overdoing in England what is extravagant and contemptible in France, expected to be allowed the first in taste, and had been used to be allowed it, were

struck with shame, to see the true elegance of a nation they affected to copy, instead of their tinsel and embroidery, disclosing itself in plainness; and the coquettes of this unfavourable region were out of countenance to see, by the delicate negligence of the woman who had been allowed the genteelest in France, that they were rather dressing at lady Die's in the opera, than at the princesses of the blood, while they sunk under the weight of ribbands and necklaces. Every one who would have been proud to have been a rival became an enemy. When Mira appeared in public all the eyes were upon her, and this, whether in approbation or curiosity, was sufficient mortification to the rest of her sex. Whenever Bertueil was seen, Men smiled, but they sent for their taylor and barbers to execute something in copy after him. Esteemed at the heart, and despised by the tongue, of the universal world among us, the happy pair were content with charming one another. Whatever was deny'd them by their country, was however amply allowed by strangers. While our people affected to disregard what they despaired to imitate, it was taste among the foreigners to admire the conspicuous pair.

pair. Every body among them visited, every body esteemed them: whatever they said was applauded; whatever they did was approved: avoided by the more eminent among our people, they appeared every where in public among the foreigners who reside here; and it was a double mortification to the belles of our own clime, to hear of a frenchwoman, for such the dress and company of Mira conspired to make her appear, who excelled them; and to the beaux to be eternally faced by a man, whose appearance convinced the general eye what very awkward imitators their best talents left them.

There is a perverseness in humankind, and 'tis most prevalent in the weaker sex, which leads us to misrepresent whatever we find ourselves in vain inclined to emulate. The gaiety of Mira was construed into wantonness, and her freedom into boldness. Charming as Mira was, she did not want her foibles: she could smile without being pleased, sigh when she thought of nothing, play with the cuff of a man's coat whom she held in contempt, and whisper things of no consequence or sense to any of her admirers,

with the air of secrecy and importance. The first time she was seen playing these coquettries at Ranelagh, it was construed into an intrigue; the next morning at Vauxhall saw her playing over the same idlenesses to another man, and at the close of the evening she honour'd half a dozen with them in equal degree of familiarity. The world had been surpris'd to see the happy husband laugh at all this in the first observations, but the tattle in the compass of the same four and twenty hours made them join with him. Mira knew the art of preventing an unjust suspicion, by diversifying the object. It is a custom our women of virtue ought to learn from the French: none but such indeed can practice it. While an unjustifiable intimacy fixes the fair criminal to one object, and she loses, while she also deserves to lose her reputation by the familiarities she allows him, those who have no connexion, no designs, should bestow their little indulgences with an equal hand on numbers, and those who would have condemned them for the same circumstances with one, will absolve them under the impossibility of a suspicion with so many. One of our old poets tells us of a beauty, who being at
a table

a table with four of her admirers at the same instant, trod on the toe of one, ogled at another, took a pinch of snuff from the third, and press'd her arm upon the hand of the fourth as she reached over him. 'Which of the four, says the bard, was the lady's favourite?' 'Why neither of the four.' — This is the true picture of an innocent coquette. This was, on paper, what Mira practised every day in real life. Incapable of a thought of farther liberties, she allowed these with great profusion, and as she meant nothing by them, she bestowed them indifferently on one man and on another.

It may seem odd for one, who writes professedly to improve the morals, to inculcate coquetry among women; but nothing is more certain, that a thousand reputations, daily sacrificed by folly, would be saved by it; and possibly sometimes the virtue of the person who practised it. The woman who receives but one admirer, sees him without the disadvantage of comparison. There is an opportunity, in but a common intimacy, which a man of address will employ to set himself above all strangers in the opinion of the person who is the object of his

his attention, and who gives him this advantage. She, who sees with eyes of equal favour, many of equal, though different claim to her approbation, will see the faults of one in the contrast of the opposite virtues of the other, and be safe from all. Let it be understood, however, that in this admonition the train of idle and unmeaning adorers only is included: these are to be distinguished from the serious and honest lover. It were as criminal to admit more than one with such pretensions at a time, as foolish to limit the number of the others; and as on that part every declaration is to be understood, as delivered in raillery; in this every approach ought to be sacred.

Mira, who was married, had nothing to do with this important regulation. She received her admirers as errant triflers, and she trifled with them. She would not condescend to suppose any one of them dared to mean more than banter, and she expected the same construction should be put on her own conduct. Those who were concerned never presumed, never were tempted to put any other on it; but with the world, who envy'd, who hated, and who wished to return

return some of the pain she gave on the head of the insolent beauty, it was otherwise. From the ill success of their first willingness to believe, at least to pretend that they believed ill of her with one man, they had sunk into scandalizing her freedoms, though not as criminal, with them all; but from this some fallen fair one, some experienced one had led them into re-assuming their first suspicions. She told them, that amidst all the coquetry of Mira, she could distinguish that all the objects of it were not equally indifferent to her: she asserted, that Mira was a woman of more cunning than had ever been known; and told them she began to laugh at herself for having been so long deceived by the address of the artful creature. ‘ You see the Baron,’ said she, mentioning one of the foreigners who was commonly of the party with Mira, ‘ affects
 ‘ as much indifference when the husband
 ‘ is by as any of the set of dangling
 ‘ fools about her; but watch him as I
 ‘ have done, when that occasion of restraint is absent, and you shall read a new
 ‘ language in his eyes; watch her when
 ‘ those of the company are another way,
 ‘ and you shall see what you little suspect at present: in short, concluded she,
 ‘ the

‘ the Baron and Mira have an affair, but
‘ they are both too cunning to let the
‘ world into the secret. People that in-
‘ tend an intimacy of this kind will
‘ continue always to take care to conceal
‘ it ; and the indifference which he affects
‘ is his part, her coquetry is her’s ; they
‘ have laid the plan, and this is the man-
‘ ner of their disguising the truth.’

How easily do people believe what they wish. The women, to whom this suspicion was proposed, instantly gave into it : they knew the lady who spoke had reason to be acquainted with what she spoke about ; and they were too eager to propagate the scandal to take any pains to examine its foundation. It was not four and twenty hours longer, before the whole town was informed, that Mira had been discovered in an intrigue with the Baron. From this may be seen what is the general foundation of the most scandalous stories. Every body repeated what every body was desirous to believe, and in the second company the name of the lady who had discovered them was mentioned, as that of one who had really found them criminal together, not with the eyes of suspicion, but in fact. The place where the hint
had

had been started was added as the scene of the discovery; in two or three more repetitions the names of the party, to whom it had been delivered, were added to the relation; and before Mira had heard that there was but a suspicion against her conduct, the whole town had the news of her having forfeited her virtue; and people were assured that such a party, naming half a dozen with their titles and names at length, had surprized them together in the dark walk at Vauxhall.

One seldom meets with a woman of sense who cares much for the company of her own sex; the triflers are in general indeed unqualified for a conversation that rises above the criticism of lace or ribbands; they look upon a woman who thinks and talks as if she were intitled to the rights and faculties of the human species, as a kind of monster, and they are treated with contempt by those whom they regard as affected. To Mira's natural reasons for approving the company of those who have sense, she had another very weighty one for confining her parties in a manner to the men; which was, that the women, out of rank envy and honest dread of being seen with

with her, would not visit her. What the generality of the sex are not qualify'd to comprehend, the whole sex misrepresent; conscious that themselves never receive the visits of a man under any other view than that of being courted, they have no conception that another can see them as friends, independently of such considerations; and, in consequence of this very acquaintance, is heighten'd into a lover. Such was the misrepresentation under which the conduct of the innocent, the accomplished Mira had suffer'd. Coquetry was all that could be laid to her charge, while her favours were supposed to be distributed equally among a hundred pretenders; but a harsher name was now given to that preference which it was supposed, and not without some foundation, that she gave to one of them.

Mira, conscious that her own innocence, and the opinion of her husband, were all that she had to reconcile to her conduct, while she offended, while she ran no hazard of offending either of those, placed no farther guard upon her behaviour. A woman who receives the men as the men receive them, will select her favou-

favourites from among them as the men do, from the similarity of their tempers, their manners, or their understandings. Mira had taken this method, and while she was complaisant to all, she was most pleased with one: she had followed her husband's opinion in the choice; the Baron was his most intimate acquaintance of all men, and he became her principal favourite. The candour, sense, and honour which had given him this preference with Bertueil, would have pleaded for the same distinction in the opinion of Mira irresistibly, but compliance with the judgment of her husband had prevented all farther motions of the choice.

The Baron was less young, less handsome, and less obsequiously complaisant than many, perhaps than most of the men who visited at the house; it will not be fair to say less polite, for there certainly is a politeness, and possibly it is the highest politeness, certainly it is that of the highest characters, which is above all that cringing assiduity that is learnt of the dancing-master. The Baron was of a time of life when judgment is mature; he had great affability of

of temper, and a desire to please in a degree superior to that in which it, perhaps, ever appeared in any man. He was a Spaniard, and consequently had some natural pride about him, but it only kept him from descending to those prettyneffes of good-breeding which are troublesome to the people they are meant to oblige. He was never sollicitous to do that, even for a lady, which her footman could as well do for her; if her fan or handkerchief fell, he would sit still, while the whole room was crowding to dispute who should have the honour of picking it up; but if the peace or happiness of Mira had been concerned, he would have taken all the steps to recover it before the polite men of the time would have been able to settle what they were. Such was the temper, such the address, such the age of the man, whose understanding and integrity of heart had recommended him to the most intimate connection with Bertueil, and, in consequence, to that of Mira. The acquaintance had continued from the time of their arriving in London, and was contrived to be continued as long as the Baron should remain in England. In winter he took a house near theirs, and gave it as
his

his reason for preferring that part of the town, that it was so: in summer they had lodgings in the same village on the banks of the Thames. The Baron breakfasted at home, but it was the only time he spent there; when other visits did not compel him, he was at Bertueil's. There was no party invited thither to which he was not added; there was no expedition into the country, no visit to a publick place in town, which he did not share with them. Conscious of no crime in the preference she gave to him, Mira never disputed calling him the most accomplished man she knew, and it was not a wonder that the eyes of suspicion discovered him as the principal favourite when they did; the miracle was that it had ever been a secret: certainly Mira had never affected to make it one.

Ignorant of the suspicions of the world, as innocent of the occasion, the usual party, which was the happy couple, the baron, and another foreigner, were at Vauxhall in the evening: they could not but distinguish that more than ordinary notice was taken of them; they saw the women turn up their noses, the men laugh, and both sexes follow them in parties,

parties, or stop to stare at them when they met them. It was easy to see that the lady and the Baron were the principal objects of this strange attention. Mira examined her dress, and begg'd her husband to tell her if there was any thing amiss: the Baron, tho' of all men the least apt to be disconcerted, was out of countenance. He puzzled himself in vain to find what it was about him that was the subject of raillery. The whole party evidently perceived that it was impossible for any body to understand it; and while they despised the ill manners, yet it could not but be troublesome to them. The dictates of a false honour, of a false pride, would have been to quit the place; but these were people actuated by better principles: they took the most conspicuous part of it; [they darted their eyes through the people who continued the insult, and while, what at first was nods and smiles, increased to whispers, and all the insolent signs of communicated intelligence of something ill. The Baron was the only man singled out by the general eye; he was therefore the only one who could properly resent it. The company at Vauxhall is of a very mix'd kind, and a
man

man of nice honour is careful even of the rank and character of the person he quarrels with. The Baron waited for a proper object on whom to revenge the insult, and at length the power of choice was taken from him by the broad grin of a tall, awkward, well-dress'd fellow, who stopp'd and star'd, first the lady and then himself, full in the face, as he came up to them. The Baron let him pass, but kept his eye upon him. A quarter of an hour after he saw him at a little distance behind them; he slipp'd his arm from under Bertueil's, and taking his new acquaintance by the sleeve, led him to the walk by the edge of the lawn; before he spoke he tore away a piece of the netting that fences off the people who would trample it to pieces, and stepping down beckoned to the other to follow him. ' You will explain to me the occasion of your affronting a lady in whose company I had the honour to be.'—The undisturbed voice with which the baron delivered this gave the antagonist courage: he told him, that he did not mean to affront the lady, for it was him he laugh'd at. ' You honour me, reply'd the baron, but you will inform me why?' ' Why, exclaims the hero, still

‘ still in good spirits, why because I
‘ think you the happiest man in the
‘ world.’ ‘ ’Tis an odd reason for laugh-
‘ ing, reply’d the baron angrily, but ex-
‘ plain.’ ‘ Explain, cry’d the other,
‘ what did you and she explain together
‘ last night in the dark walk? Why don’t
‘ you see all the gardens have it? Why
‘ if you design to call every body to ac-
‘ count that knows it, you must fight
‘ all the gardens.’ ‘ If I fight only those
‘ who know it, sir, reply’d the Baron
‘ very deliberately, it is justice to that
‘ lady to assure you, that I have no
‘ quarrel with any; but, continued he,
‘ drawing, if every body suspects it, I must
‘ resent it against as many as I can.’
‘ The antagonist was a man who had been
used to talk loud in coffee-houses, who
spent half the day with a foil in his
hand, and was the terror of all his ac-
quaintance; but he was one of those who
have an utter aversion to a sword. It was
in vain the baron intreated, urged, in-
sisted, kicked, cuffed, and threatned with
immediate destruction: no arguments were
of force to make his enemy draw; he
could do no more than turn him out of
the place. The fellow desired he would
treat him like a gentleman, and not insult
him

him as he passed through the crowd. The baron told him, he should not scandalize himself so far as to be seen kicking a coward: he saw him to the door, and, refusing his offer of begging the lady's pardon, put him out, under a promise not to come there again for the season.

Violence and turbulence of passion are the peculiarities of young tempers. The baron was so deliberate and undisturbed in his resentment, that when he join'd the party they had no guess what had happened. The gazing and the influence of the general eye continued, and the vexation and uneasiness of the company increased under it. The Baron could not see them in pain when he had it in his power to explain the cause to them: he whisper'd Bertueil to speak a word alone; they took the opportunity, when half a dozen of their common acquaintance had join'd the party, to retire to a little distance, and the baron told him the story of the lawn. Bertueil, tho' incapable of suspicion, tho' conscious that himself had never left them on the preceding evening, was mov'd. He press'd his friend's hand, and, after a thousand asseverations of the

absence of all thought of suspicion, begg'd him to prevent farther insult by leaving them for the remainder of the evening. Mira came up as they were talking; there had not been used to be secrets kept from her; the husband told her all he had heard, and what he had requested of the baron for the remainder of the night. If there be any thing more tender than a husband's honour, it is the virtue of the innocent wife. She turn'd pale at the accusation; but when she recovered herself,—‘ Bertueil, ‘ said she, I don't know that we ever ‘ differed in opinion before; but surely ‘ the baron's leaving us will look like ‘ a confession that it ought to be so; ‘ why should innocence fear to shew its ‘ face? I may be wrong, but if there ‘ is reason in this, (you best know whether there be,) let us continue together, ‘ to discountenance that slander which ‘ has no right to hurt us.’ Bertueil confessed she was right. They order'd a supper in the most conspicuous part of the gardens; and it was indignation, not confusion, that glow'd in the face of Mira as she saw through the insults of a malicious world.

The

The consequence shew'd that Mira had judged rightly of the proper conduct. People were amaz'd that guilt could be so brazen : they star'd to see the husband sit unmov'd between the wife and the gallant. They were astonished to see him countenance both after so publick a proof of their guilt; and it was the unanimous voice, that the world would see them no more together.

The common determination of the innocent, the certain resolution of the guilty, in such a situation, would have been to have kept asunder for the future; and this would have join'd with the common thought of the world in countenancing the story. The party who were concerned in this cruel attack acted on other principles. There is a pride in innocence which will support itself against all things. The indignation of Mira against the authors of the scandal is not to be expressed; but the conduct she had prescrib'd for the preceding night, she urged should be followed on that which was coming. Instead of avoiding Vauxhall, she determined to be there for a long time : she conjur'd the

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baron

baron, as concerned in the support of her character, always to be with her : she begg'd her husband never to be absent. She join'd to their party, for every night, three or four women of the first fashion, whom she honestly informed of the cause, and of her method of preventing the success of the design to ruin her reputation.

She was right in all. People who saw her every night at the same place ; who saw the husband and the pretended gallant in the strictest intimacy ; who saw women of the first rank in virtue, as well as quality, always with Mira, and with the very party which had been the object of the censure, began to suspect the truth of the accusation on the first night ; on the second they declar'd it must be all a falsity ; and, in the compass of a week, the character of Mira was set on the same honourable footing that it had always held, and that it always had a right to hold.



HISTORY

HISTORY IX.

IT is not only in the restoring characters unjustly suspected that prudence and a rational conduct may be of use; the want of attention to them may be the source of infamy to those who neither deserve, nor, without this incident, would have incurr'd suspicion. When the virtuous sink under a misfortune of this kind, their innocence will, at one time or other, clear itself; though in the meanwhile they pay a heavy price for their indiscretion: when on the contrary it happens to those who, though faultless in the present circumstance, have been criminal in others, it is irrecoverable. Such is the consequence of virtue, even in circumstances under which it is not immediately concern'd; such are the penalties of vice, even beyond the reach of the particular occasion.

Sylvia, who had been so earnest in her suspicion on the charming Mira, who had pursued that unsuccessful plan, on principles which only could fail because

the accused was free of the offence, had been taught in what retreat to look for her enemy, because herself had used it. She was one of those few women, who, as too many in ~~this~~ ill-natur'd age have a worse, have a better character than they deserve; and she had preserved it, even without that caution, which often exerts itself in vain in favour of innocence.

Sylvia had been in her youth one of those dangles after the quality, who, for the pride of dining at their table, or being sometimes set down by their coachman, have the good-nature to supply the place of a fille de chambre, when that useful creature is out of the way, or out of the good graces of her lady; who will get up at dinner to reach his lordship a glass of wine; will read the lady to sleep when she has the vapours; or occasionally will do the good-natur'd office for a young fellow who has been so unfortunate as never to see her charming friend till after she was married; who cannot find that her having a husband is a reason why she should not have eyes; and whom the lady is determin'd to see some time or other, when his lordship is out of the way, purely to get rid of him.

It had been the fortune of Sylvia to pass three years of the earlier part of her life in the family of a woman of fashion, who had the misfortune for all that time to be persecuted with one miserable lover or other of this kind. Sylvia had found the way to conduct every affair of this sort to the satisfaction of both parties. The lover was always introduced as her acquaintance; the lady fell in upon them by accident, as they were at tea in her dressing-room. She was in deshabille, the attendant was complaisant, and one accident or other never failed to call her out of the room and detain her till the bell gave her the signal of their being impatient at her absence. Sylvia, by this means, became acquainted with all the men of intrigue in town. She was pretty: she was indigent: she had example to support necessity. The visits which were pretended to the lady were sometimes paid in earnest to the convenient; and Sylvia, who set herself at some price, and had the address to make every slip the first, indulged two passions at once, and was amassing a little fortune.

Men have odd turns in matters of love and liking, and they come upon them as oddly. Sir Charles will see charms in mrs. Edging that command his attention in vain in his lady ; that are denied his approbation only because they have a right to it. My lord had often given a side glance to Sylvia as he was playing with his virtuous lady's hand. He had found fire in her eyes ; he had thought her agreeable, though not commanding. She knew his situation better than he did himself : she threw herself in his way one afternoon that he was alone in his chamber. The virtues of his wife were in vain pleaded against the attempt of injuring her with an unhappy creature who hardly dared to refuse him. The innocence of the pleading victim was but a new source of appetite to his passions. He made the conquest ; he repeated his adoration : he redoubled his fondness to his lady to prevent suspicions ; and in one house were carried on, for half a year, intrigues and prostitution on all sides, while not one of the persons entertain'd the least suspicion of the other. At the end of this period Sylvia produced an invitation from a rich aunt in Wales : my lord, who had been favour'd with the secret of a more important

tant cause of her absence, consented to it. The lady made her a present of a hundred pound bank note to bear her charges, and my lord of two hundred for her immediate occasions; and of a settlement of as much a year.

Sylvia, instead of retiring to Wales, took post-chaise for Dover. She remain'd in the south of France five months; she left a little daughter in charge for a nunnery education, and she returned to England unsuspected.

This was that Sylvia who had suspected the innocent Mira of that which herself had done without suspicion. She returned to the family whence she had removed. She mentioned her annuity as the purchase of what her aunt's death had left her possess'd of, and she became respected by those who had before used to treat her with some degree of indifference. She found her lord suspicious; for 'tis the vice of every man who knows ill of a woman with himself to suspect her with others. She saw more advantage in new acquaintances than she could promise herself from one who had already paid her, as he might reasonably enough suppose, for all the services of her life.

life. She was earnest to improve her affairs; she was impatient of the restraint under which she saw herself in the family to which she had owed her fortune: she was, as every woman who has obtain'd all that she expects is, ungrateful. She made a pretended quarrel with the lady, and placed herself in lodgings.

Few women suppose what a vast advantage there is in the countenance of persons of character; what advantages in a situation that sets them out of the reach of slander. Sylvia, who had been the prostitute to fifty people without suspicion, under those happy circumstances, found it as impossible, as it was necessary for her to carry on one amour in secret in her state of independency. She had just fixed herself in her new scene of life, and got well received among a numerous and genteel acquaintance, when her malice had so unjustly injured the character of the amiable Mira. It had been some reproach to her to have propagated such a piece of falshood which had not succeeded; for even the people who love mischief hate the persons who make it; and add to their detestation contempt, when it does not succeed. This, however,

ever, was little to what follow'd. The husband of the lady, to whose countenance she had owed her first reception in the world, thought he had a right to continue an acquaintance with her; and, as his visits were more frequent than those of his lady, they were not entirely without suspicion. If Sylvia found herself necessitated to admit these, there were others which she received by choice. While only one of the gay people of the town was admitted, it was supposed an honourable amour; when two or three more grew familiar she began to be talk'd of with freedom: from suspicion people advanced to censure, and the character of Sylvia was not long alive after the baffled attempt she had made upon that of the other.

The world are seldom right in their suspicions. While they barely guess'd that something might be amiss between Sylvia and the lord, who was so frequently with her, they were blind to a second prostitution: and while they neglected that, they gave her up on an occasion in which she was not guilty. It would be asserting too roundly, to say she had no design upon any of the several people.

Besides her favourite, who visited her ; but at a time when she had not been criminal with them, her reputation suffer'd by their attendance. Though nothing is so frequent as the sacrificing a woman's character when she is not in fault, nothing is more so than to find that she who has lost it in a wrong place has escaped in a right. Three or four young fellows, of loose principles, were now seen every where with Sylvia in public. She began to give into the taste of preferring the men's company to the women's, and the women began to neglect her in return. She had not the right to make the exchange which those have who, under female forms, have the souls of men ; and she deserved the return she received, for giving the preference, from a very bad principle, where it might have been the effect of a very good one. All yet, however, was but suspicion ; and that, as it was apply'd, groundless. The men who dangle after women in public, who press their civilities, and are eternally affecting the appearance of an intimacy, are not those whom it is rational to suspect of it. While we trifle with an ill-natur'd construction on these idlenesses, we neglect the man who sups with the object of our
censure,

censure, and whose tete a tetes only the secret mrs. Trusty is acquainted with. Sylvia was condemn'd for being eternally abroad with rakes: she was given up when it was heard that she was the toast of every tavern debauch: the women turn'd up their noses at her when they heard her name was to be read on every glass and decanter in the houses of resort; but they did not know that all this time the man who never was seen with her at all, who waited in her dressing-room to receive her when the very people who were fullest of surmises set her down, did not part from her 'till daylight.

'Tis a certainty; that unless a woman is so inconsiderate to intrigue with a boy, whose pride in his first conquest will not suffer him to keep it a secret, the person with whom she is criminal is not seen with her in public, nor will mention her name in any company. Sylvia was not ill paid by the man who at this time had her person; but the remembrance of her success with her lord, put into her thoughts the same scheme against this lover. She saw, among the crowds who attended her, many whom she could have pre-

preferr'd to her present intimate ; but she determin'd to make the most of him before she should make the change. An incident favour'd the propensity she had to it, and she sacrificed to her warmth of temper and want of prudence what she found, too late, irrecoverable.

From distant surmises people had grown to more and more free censures ; the women, who had taken offence at her running away with so many of the men, from those who had more pretensions to their admiration, found that this was an advantage any woman might have over those who were handsomer, provided she would give them room to think she might be had : they whisper'd a thousand tales about her ; and when the people who follow'd her declar'd she would grant all favours but one, they would not believe that one withheld.

Nothing is more frequent than that we sacrifice, by our want of prudence, that which was but shaken, not overthrown, by the attack that has alarmed us. This was exactly the case with Sylvia. Impatient to find her character accused where it was not faulty, she determined it not worth her
while

while to use disguise where it was. The man who had hitherto given up all those hours, which she spent in public, from a tendernefs for her reputation, was admitted to attend her every where; and tho' the old acquaintance he had with her was not suspected, all was soon given up to what was supposed a new one. There is something in the behaviour of a couple of people, who have had all sorts of familiarities, that will betray it to a discerning eye. This was too palpable in the manner in which Sylvia and her new acquaintance, as he was supposed, treated one another. The world gave them instantly, on their appearance, as lover and mistress, and it was but few days before they saw that she was such, in every sense of the word, to him. People had only been cool to her, while she had become outrageous on the first suspicion. They now gave her up. The cards which she left at their doors were never returned, and it was but here and there a very old intimate that would curtsy to her in public.

Not aware of what it was that she was doing, she determined to give up the world as it had done her. 'Tis a step, if women could have their eyes open to the conse-

consequences, that no provocation would induce them to take. There is infinite difference between the strongest suspicion and avowed guilt. A prudent conduct may at some time get over the one, nothing can surmount the other. Sylvia blind to the future, scarce deny'd that she was the mistress of the man with whom she was now every where seen, and from this abandoned conduct her determined scheme became easier of execution. She had the address to persuade her lover that no other had ever been so; she attributed to her wild passion for him what she had been led to by the provoking treatment she had received from the world: he had vanity enough to be pleased with the name of such a conquest, though too much honour to have betray'd it. She made a merit of having sacrificed the world to him, and he, who saw the importance of what she had done in a stronger light than she did herself, thought his obligations to her much greater than he would have done if he had known that the world was all that she had sacrificed to him: and that, for so herself understood it, not till after it had given her up. The last card was now to be play'd: Sylvia had been more and more obliging; the

the lover more tender of her. What one passion only, fondness had at first rendered dear to him, pride now added to the value of. He saw the world envy him, and the price of the acquisition rose, as it always does, with the envy. Sylvia could not have a better opportunity for doing what she had proposed: she did not find herself in the condition in which her other lover had provided for her; but it was easy to pretend that she did. She told her favourite with tears, but she added they were tears of joy, that she should be blest'd with a remembrance of their acquaintance: she confess'd herself unable to bear the insolence of the world under such a situation, and begg'd his permission to retire into France, till she should be able to appear again.

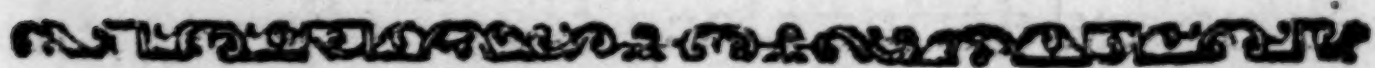
The lover could not question the truth of what he was told; he could not dispute the prudence of her resolution; he had like to have been guilty of as unwelcome a step, in declaring that he would go with her. But she soon got the better of that, and they parted, though not upon such advantageous terms as she had expected, yet on such as there was no complaining of. When she became
more

more acquainted with the finances of her lover, she found it was not in his power to make a settlement; but the present he delivered into her hands at parting was so considerable, that she, in pursuit of her determined vow, bought a small annuity with it, which, though it would have been a trifle in itself, was an addition of importance to what she before possess'd. The recovery of Mira from the censure which the world, at the instigation of this artful creature, were endeavouring to fix upon her, was not more perfect than was her own fall. Every body saw the occasion of her absence, though but a pretended one. To fix the attempt upon the lover she had the address, for some time before, to wear stays of a particular form; and while he saw her big under these, the world was not blind to it. 'Twas whisper'd every where that Sylvia was in such a situation, and her leaving the town at so regular a time after it, was as convincing a proof of the truth of their suspicions, and of the intent with which she was gone, as if herself had told every body the same tale that she had to the person concern'd. She went neglected, she return'd despis'd.

Thus

Thus, from the effect of prudence and the want of it, Sylvia, in two different capacities, possess'd the reputation she had not deserved, and even more censure than that to which she had a right. She who had been unsuspected during a long course of repeated prostitution, who had been the instrument of breaking the bands of marriage in a once happy family, and had deluded the husband after she had debauched the wife, and all this without any stain upon her reputation, became a sacrifice to the censure of the world, when she less deserved it, tho' she deserved it: she who had got thro' the most alarming and the troublesome scene that can attend a vicious amour, and had suffered no one even to imagine she had gone through it, now sacrificed herself to the appearance of it when there was no reality. 'Tis thus the censure of the world, though out of time and on wrong occasions, usually falls, with the proper weight, on the person who has deserved it: 'tis thus conduct, in regard to the world, is of more importance to a woman even than virtue; though to herself virtue only is the solid pleasure: is that which will make her face the severest calumny with a smile; while guilt will make those tremble who are
accused

accused even in a wrong place ; and the consciousness of being open on some other part will make them very tender in their resentments.



HISTORY X.

THE lover of Sylvia, who had been so honoured by the conquest, so dup'd by the artifice, was one of those men in whom a love of play supercedes almost every other passion ; even his love often gave way to it, and the blooming Sylvia has watch'd the whole night out at the window, while he was cursing that fortune, which himself created over a billiard table. 'Tis a rule among the men of understanding, in regard to fighting, that no man finds it worth while to do it, but he who does not find it worth his while to live : as infallible a maxim among those who think rationally of play is, that no man should ever game who has any thing to lose. The beggars always make that fortune which they could not injure ; and there are but one sort of people on the spoils of whom they can raise themselves.

Curtius

Curtius was a man of fortune : his paternal estate descended to him encumbered, but it was considerable. On this certainty of losing he set out to play. The prospect was that of recovering the follies of his father, and leaving his fortune clear to his descendant. There requires more, however, than a good end in view, the means must be good by which it is pursued, if we would lay a rational claim to success.

Curtius, on the established principle, was one of those who must lose, because he set out with something to lose : Curtius was not one of those, however, who are the errant and obvious dupes of all that join them. He study'd play as a science, before he engaged deeply in the practice ; he made himself a master of the games, and was perfect in the matter of calculation ; he knew where the odds lay, and what they were, under every circumstance : and was always in the depth of the secret as to the advantage that one man had over another in the match, as well as under the different chances of the game.

With

With these advantages, and with a considerable capital, some would think Curtius set out on a rational plan of improving his fortune by this honourable profession. He thought so, but he was deceived. Beside all the knowledge that can be acquired of play, there requires prudence: a command of temper is requisite to give a man the opportunity of using these talents; without it, he who is possess'd of them, will be a dupe to the veryest idiot who has it. A knowledge of mankind is the first of the true gamester's principles; 'tis this on which he builds his certainty of plundering them: he studies their passions; he has none of his own, at least he is actuated by none when the business of life is on foot; he will rouse them by a thousand artifices; and he will exasperate, face out, and elevate them at his pleasure: with the obstinate, he will make a run of ill luck provoke them to stake deeper to recover, under circumstances in which it is impossible they should win; with the more timid, he will make success the bait; he will lose two nights together to engage his companion to stake ten times as much as all he had won on the third, under

under chances in which it is scarce possible he should do other than lose it.

These are the arts of the profess'd gamester, from the master of the holiday orange-barrow, who strips the Easter apprentice of his sixpences, to the embroider'd sharper, who sweeps the tables at White's or George's. These are arts by which money is won at play; these are below the reach of those who have money to lose; and 'tis thence that inevitably and invariably those who have money to lose, lose it. It were descending to a scene more infamous to talk of the sharper; (for what we have hitherto pointed out is not stigmatized by that name) who carries false dice and supernumerary cards in his pockets; who watches at taverns for men whom he finds drunk, or whom he can make so, and strips them in that situation. This is given up as cheating, the rest is only knowing mankind, and playing the best of the game.

Curtius, a man of fortune and of honour, was as much above that baseness which is countenanced under the softer, as that which is condemned under the harsher term.

term. He would not believe there were such arts and practices, farther than in speculation; he esteemed them the Mohawks of careful fathers and guardians, invented to keep their wards from bad hours and bad company; and he trusted to his own discernment to point them out to him, if there should be such, or any thing but like such; and to his resolution in keeping him at a sufficient distance from them. 'Tis easy for a man, in his cool moments, to enter into resolutions which it will be impossible for him to keep when he should bring himself to the trial. Curtius, who determined to play, as every body else does, with an intent to win, made it a first point that he never would engage with any but those who had something to lose; and as he did not rush into it headlong, but had opportunities of knowing the characters of all who frequented the places where there were highest stakes. One of his wisest, as well as firmest determinations, was to avoid those who even had once had nothing, as he thought it by no means his interest to add to what was accumulating, be the means what they would. Conscious what were the advantages, he determined never to engage

engage but where they were on his side ; and satisfied of the games at which himself excell'd, he was resolved to play no others.

Here was a plan laid down as regularly, and as rationally, as could be expected : a scheme, under which more than the person who had devised it, might be led to suppose it was impossible he should otherwise than win : but the best mine may become useless when there is another dug below it ; or the train may miss if the ingredients be imperfect. Both these circumstances tended to overthrow the well-laid plan of Curtius. Tho' he had sunk deep, there were among the enemy those who had been longer engineers, who knew how to expect all this, and who had lodged themselves beneath it ; and tho' all the resolutions were right, he was a man who took them, and a man ignorant when he did so of the temptations there would be to break them. His passions were more powerful than he would give himself leave to suppose, when they were not excited ; and ignorant of the provocations they were to bear, he was not upon

his guard against the advantages they would possess over them.

Curtius commenced gamester. All people win when they set out. 'Tis an old observation, but, like many others, it is not so well understood as remember'd: the devil, men say, gives them this advantage to lead them farther in. Perhaps it is not necessary to have recourse to this aerial minister: those with whom they play have much of his cunning, and many of his good qualities; they suffer 'em to win that they may be lur'd to the bait; and they are right to lose under so good a prospect. One ill run at setting out would deter many a man; perhaps it would deter every man from continuing; but one evening of success fixes him for ever. If he loses on the next twice what he had won on the first; if he lose that which would have frightened him for ever from the table on a first attempt; he considers it now as the chance of what might have been for him: he recollects his winning yesterday; he thinks it is his turn to win to-morrow; he loses deeper: he determines on a third attempt, as a chance under which fortune cannot desert him; and he then

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then sacrifices so much, that the rest is not worth his care. He who play'd at first because he was covetous, now does it because he is desperate. The remainder is not worth preserving when it may be a means of recovering what is gone; the runs of ill luck are not any more than those of good, eternal. If he plays with those who are any thing above errant sharpers, he will probably win on the fourth or fifth night; and from this time he finds himself entered too deep to go back. His fortune incumber'd to a degree beyond all hope but that of play to restore it; the remaining pittance unequal to his expences, and useless to his pleasures; he keeps alive a year or two amidst the thousand vicissitudes of fortune, and then drops into nothing.

Thus it happens to all who play, excepting only the few who have capacities to comprehend, and calmness to take the advantages; or who have meanness and dishonesty enough to create them. Thus it had begun to fare with Curtius. Impatient under losses, mad with success, his passions had made him the property of all who play'd with him: he had lost two thirds of a very considerable fortune

tune when he met with Sylvia. He was fluctuating between affluence and beggary while he was acquainted with her; and the presents which he had made her after evenings of success, (forgetting that fortune had a title to claim back what she had lent him) and particularly the sum his abused generosity had stripped himself of at their parting, had not a little contributed to reduce him.

Notwithstanding all the address, and all the boasted resolution of Curtius, he play'd to disadvantage; and he play'd with one of those people against whom he had taken up his most firm determinations. One of the professed strippers of heirs had fixed upon him during the first nights of his playing; he ingratiated himself to him by losing freely; he play'd at what games, and on what conditions, Curtius would; he lost at one a little fortune, on the presumption of continuing him his antagonist: but from the time when the hook was fixed the scene began to change; the loser claimed his right of changing the games, though he had no pretence to alter the conditions. What Curtius had won by his skill

skill he lost by his ill fortune, possibly by assisted ill fortune. All the success he had at games of skill was sacrificed at games of chance: if he won a thousand pounds at billiards, he lost it at tossing up; if he was conqueror at tennis, he was sure to be beat at even and odd. Out of patience at this provoking ill fortune, he would return to the games at which he had won; and to induce the loser to play with him, he would play matches at which it was impossible he should other than lose. The plunderer pursued his fortune. When eagerness in success, or impatience under loss, urged Curtius to push his fate, the other, who had no passions, declin'd, till he drew him into such unequal conditions that he must be winner: he would praise the wine till the other was drunk; toss up with him for five hundred, when he could not see head from tail on the half-crown; and would introduce a message from his mistress, when twice as much depended on a single hazard. Curtius, who was above all artifice, could have no chance with this master of deceit; a man who indulg'd his appetites had no equality with such a thing of water-gruel: the one was all open, the other always designing;

the one a slave to a thousand passions, the other actuated by none; but upon the watch for all the effects which they could influence in his antagonist. Is it a wonder Curtius was ruined!

They had been all night at billiards, and the score had spoke largely in favour of Curtius in the morning: his adversary had paid him four thousand pounds. They had sat down to coffee in the morning: the loser had pretended to drink burnt brandy after it, to lead the man, whom he intended yet to plunder, into it: Curtius, whose eyes were never open to these designs, had swallowed the bait. The quantity too little to have had much effect under more equal circumstances, on an empty stomach and disturbed head, had taken full effect. They drew lots at a hundred pounds a stake, till Curtius fell asleep over the score. About noon he found himself waking in an arm chair at a tavern; he examined his pocket-book, to look over the treasures of the night; he did not remember that he had lost them in the morning. He was astonish'd to find himself, instead of enriched by so many thousands, stripp'd of all he had before: he sought his antagonist;

gonist ; and he was not acquainted with the height of his destruction, till that gentleman produced his note for three thousand pounds more, which he had lost to him, the hand-writing of which it was impossible for him to deny, though it was evident the finger that guided the pen was very unequal to its office.

Here was a stroke quite unexpected : a final one. The whole remains of Curtius's fortune did not amount to more than would satisfy this single demand : it was in vain that he solicited the créditor to give him a chance of winning back : the sum was too considerable to suffer him to enter on any new score till it was paid ; and he left him abruptly, only telling him, he did not doubt his behaving like a man of honour.

Curtius was meditating on the incident ; in doubt whether to fall a martyr to that false honour, to which it was demanded he should sacrifice his utmost farthing, or to retire from the world, and to pass an obscure and ignominious life on the income he could purchase with it as an annuity. To determine a point, too difficult in itself, a letter from

Sylvia was delivered to him: she was returned; she had made a new acquaintance; and the purport of her letter was to reproach him with having made her but a very unequal return to the sacrifice she had made to him, and to confess the new attachment; with a request, that as he was not able to make her fortune himself, he would not, by idle and improper visits, prevent her doing it with another.

When the glass is quite full, the smallest drop will make it run over. Curtius would have despised the meanness of a mercenary woman at another time; but now his heart was too full of affliction to represent this insult to him any other way than as an aggravation of it. He sent to the man to whom he had lost the money; he took proper measures for making the debt secure to him; ‘And now, said he, I have settled my account with you, I’ll set you an example how you should do that which will, probably, be one time as necessary to you as it is now to me.’ As he spoke he went to his escrutore, took out a pistol, and without hesitation shot himself through the head.

HISTORY



HISTORY XI.

THE report of the instrument of death by which Curtius had fallen, called up the people of the house in which he lodged: the master was a plain, sensible, and resolute man; he had no reason, from any part of his lodger's conduct, to suppose his affairs desperate, or his temper melancholy; he saw the pistol on the floor; he saw but one person in the room; he who alone could have given an account of the action, was past the power of words; he seized on the man who had indeed been the occasion, though not the means of his death, and insisted on his attending him to the next magistrate,

Were it possible for men to conceive of what importance their private character might be at some time to them, they would place a higher value than they do in general, on that which is in itself inestimable. Without an immediate crime, Marus was in the high road to death; he no sooner appeared before the magistrate, than the polite terms of shar-

per and pickpocket, a language too natural to those, who are continually speaking to the mean, the guilty, and the infamous, were repeated with some vehemence; and the justice told him he had often said he did not doubt but he should one time or other have him before him. The sentence, which cannot be obtained against a man when he is criminal, is often his fate when he is innocent. The conduct of a man's whole life is the general means of judging of any particular act of it, and the punishment due under one circumstance is inflicted in another: we will believe no ill, unless proved against him, of whom we know none; and on the other part, we take every thing as proved that is but asserted against those who (we are assured) could be guilty of it. We have not wanted in England an instance of one man, who after having escaped the sentence for many things which he had done, received it for that which he could not do; and there was now great appearance that Marus, whom the world knew to have done many things which deserved the gallows, would reach that merited end of his life, for a thing which he had not committed. In the eye of justice it had been right. The robbery,

robbery, for his manner of winning the unhappy Curtius's fortune could not be call'd properly by a softer name, deserved death, though he had no hand in the murder, and even if the whole event had been afterwards explained, none would have regretted his suffering for an imaginary crime what he had merited for a real one.

The severity of the magistrate encouraged the eagerness of the witnesses against him. Murder, as it may be the fate of every man, affects every one with a peculiar detestation and horror. The good man of the house, confident that he was guilty, stretched a little in the evidence: an error, perhaps, too common in judicial cases. Marus sent for his friends, but they were not men whose appearance could give much sanction to his character; they were of the same profession with himself; and, as justice makes no distinction of persons, but calls thievery and rapine by the same name, whatever may be the title of those who perpetrate or countenance them, his friends were honour'd with no better a distinction than that of sharpers. It was in vain that they offer'd bail, their situation put it out of their

power to give it ; it was as much in vain, that Marus offer'd to deposit ten thousand pounds in the hands of tradesmen whom he had employed, as their security in doing the friendly office. The crime of which he was accus'd was capital, and the magistrate refused it.

Marus was conducted to a prison : the place where the suppos'd crime had been committed, and its other circumstances, determined that prison particularly, the worst and the most infamous to which he could have been conducted. Submission was the only part he had to act. The world pity'd the unhappy dead, and curs'd the accused ; they had in their lives hated the one in a degree equal to that in which they had loved the other : and as we naturally believe all ill of those whom we detest, and all good of such as we approve, every circumstance of the story was told in favour of the dead, and a thousand falsties invented to blacken the character of the living. Stories were carry'd from mouth to mouth, that set him in the worst light, and the public papers were loaded with relations, under feign'd names, in which he appear'd much worse than he ought to have done.

There

There is very little credit to be pay'd to the common report; and if people were aware, that in propagating what they do not know to be true, they may be unfairly prejudicing those on whom a sentence is to depend, they would see in the light of a crime, what they do in wantonness. Justice and impartiality are the due even of the blackest criminal: here was a man innocent of that which he was accus'd of, and who might have died a sacrifice to the inconsiderate severity of those who had no right to be concern'd.

There was in the world one person, and only one, who could prove Marus innocent. This was one who had never seen, or perhaps heard of him before; it was Sylvia. As that ungrateful creature's letter had been the immediate cause of the rash action of the dead, he had, before he executed his purpose, returned her an answer full of reproach and bitterness, and concluded with assuring her of his determined purpose of destroying himself.

The great passion in the heart of Sylvia was interest. Her sacrifices to love had been all actuated by this principle:

it was this reigning affection which, like the rod of Aaron, swallowed up all the rest. We have seen her, in the course of her own story, sacrificing to it faith, honour, pleasure, gratitude and justice; and we are not to wonder, that after this there was nothing she would regard in comparison of it; no step that she would not take to gratify it. She had heard of Marus as a successful villain; she had been told his acquisitions amounted to a very great sum: she was swift in her discernment of her interests; but wary in the steps by which she pursued them. She inform'd herself, from two or three of his most intimate acquaintances, who had visited her in hope of learning some circumstances that might appear in his favour, that he was at this time worth twenty-eight thousand pounds. Too conscious of the value of her services, and of the price she might set on them, she had dropp'd no word, no hint, that could be favourable, in their hearing. Sensible of what they wanted, and as sensible that the more desperate his circumstance, the more assured would be her success; she threw into all her discourse terms that contradicted every thought of Curtius's having, as Marus declared, destroy'd himself.

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himself. And if the friends of the prisoner came to her almost without hope, they left her in utter despair.

The cautious Sylvia, not thinking it worth while to hazard her own person for the most promising advantage, for her first step sent to a proper adviser of the law. She prefaced what she had to say to him by a present of a fifty pound note ; for even the avaritious, when self is concerned, can be bountiful. She ask'd him a number of distant questions ; and when the answers to them all had been in her favour, she produced the letter of Curtius. ‘ You will do me the justice, ‘ sir, said she, to believe that a peevish ‘ man might reproach me in terms that I ‘ did not deserve from him ; but the ‘ question is, whether my producing that ‘ letter, in which he declares an intention ‘ of destroying himself, and accuses me ‘ as the cause of it, can bring me into ‘ question as having any hand in his ‘ death ?’ The lawyer laugh’d her out of her fears on this foundation ; and convinced her, by a thousand precedents, that it was impossible she should be call’d upon as so much as a witness, unless she chose to talk of that letter ; and that even then,

then, the paper itself, not her person, was the evidence.'

Tho' the lawyer saw nothing of her drift, he had answer'd all her purposes; she dismiss'd him with great civility, and after a contemplation on the pillow, in which she represented to herself both sides of the question, and all the possible circumstances; and found them all in her favour, she put on a gown of her maid's, and, without any attendant, was set down on Ludgate-hill. She found her way to the gaol and ask'd for the prisoner. He received her with politeness, but thought the visit of a stranger very impertinent. She desir'd to be alone with him, and when shew as so, she began as follows: 'Your situation, sir, will
' make me very tender of improper
' terms; but it is your interest to converse with me with perfect frankness.
' 'Till the conclusion of my visit you
' will not be able to guess what has occasion'd it; but as I do most solemnly assure you, and as you will find
' when I shall declare myself that your
' life solely and entirely depends upon it,
' I conjure you to use no disguise with
' me in any thing you say; nor to de-
' lude

‘ lude yourself and deceive me to your
 ‘ ruin, by making it either worse, (tho’
 ‘ I do not see how that can be done) or
 ‘ better than it is.’

An exordium of this kind alarm’d the
 unhappy fellow in the highest degree :
 he promis’d an absolute truth in all his
 answers. ‘ I do not, in the first place,
 ‘ said she, ask you whether you are guil-
 ‘ ty, for I know you are innocent.’ Ma-
 rus was strangely startled at this declara-
 tion, and more so at the emphasis with
 which she pronounced it. He assured
 her that he was. ‘ The material que-
 ‘ stion from me, sir, continued she, is
 ‘ whether you have any hope of esca-
 ‘ ping that sentence which the appea-
 ‘ rances that are against you, the par-
 ‘ tiality and malice of your accusers, and
 ‘ the inevitable ignorance of the court in
 ‘ the circumstances which would clear
 ‘ you, must, I think certainly draw
 ‘ upon you? I do not represent, con-
 ‘ tinued she, your case to you in all its
 ‘ terrors ; I dare say you know them all.
 ‘ But in the strictest sense of the charge
 ‘ I have given you, and in all that since-
 ‘ rity you have promised, answer me ;
 ‘ have you any hope of escaping a sen-
 ‘ tence

‘ tence of death ?’ The amaz’d prisoner answer’d, ‘ Though I am innocent I have none.’ ‘ Are we alone, said the lady ?’ ‘ Are you assured no one can hear us ?’ ‘ be certain, for on this alone every thing depends.’ Marus examin’d and answer’d yes. ‘ Then, sir, said she, your life is in my power. I can clear you. You are worth a large sum ; are you willing to purchase life with half of it ?’ Marus was astonish’d more than ever ; but he answer’d without hesitation, that he was willing, and would be thankful for the purchase.

‘ I sir, continued she, am *Sylvia*. You must have heard of me. Before I proceed let me tell you, that if you attempt one unfair step in this ; if you have but one witness to what I am now saying, I will give you up for ever. Do you intend fair ? said she earnestly, or will you sacrifice that life, which is perfectly safe, to a deceit ?’ On his repeated assurances that he was transported at the offer, and would embrace it most willingly on her own terms, she proceeded : ‘ I have a letter which proves that he destroy’d himself ; and that he
‘ did

‘ did it on a fix’d and before-taken resolution.’

Marus now saw the whole purpose, he fell on his knees to his benefactress; and, as the fortunes of such people are always in cash, he engaged to purchase the letter, and her assured evidence, the next morning, on the prompt payment of fourteen thousand pounds. Much discourse pass’d between them before they parted, and it would not be easy to say which were most in raptures on the occasion.

While Sylvia was meditating on her pillow the part of the kingdom to which she should retire to enjoy her new fortune, Marus, whose head was not inferior even to hers in scheming, was contriving to evade the Payment of the money. He hit upon a method, and then prepar’d himself for putting it in execution. He waited for the hour of the appointment; he receiv’d his visitant with a smiling countenance; he complimented her person; he ran into raptures on her understanding; and he concluded a long speech by telling her, that though she had demanded but half his fortune he had

had form'd a design of throwing at her feet the whole. ' You know, madam, ' said he, what 'tis ; you know the world, ' and will easily believe that a man who ' understands mankind will easily make ' it a great deal more. As to the igno- ' miny of a prison, you have too much ' understanding to suppose it the place ' that gives it. I am innocent, and the ' shame of my being here falls on those ' who were the occasion of it. 'Tis an ' odd manner of address, concluded he ; ' but, madam, 'tis an honest and a sincere ' one. You see me as much in these two ' visits as you will in my whole life. I ' am not inclined to dissemble ; nor if ' I were, have I application enough to ' be at the pains of it. A thousand ' things may crowd upon your thoughts ' on this occasion, one only employs ' mine, the doubt whether I am not dis- ' agreeable to you.

The mercenary Sylvia, who had received men into the most intimate acquaintances without love, was not backward in taking a husband on the same occasion : she saw affluence the recovery of her character, and many other good consequences in the offer, she closed with it.

it. ‘ I shall convince you, said she, that
 ‘ your doubts are groundless : - you have
 ‘ given me a proof of great frankness,
 ‘ for which I like you, and shall claim
 ‘ your good opinion by returning it with
 ‘ another. I take you at your word,
 ‘ and have so good an opinion of a
 ‘ man’s understanding, that against all
 ‘ other considerations I take a stranger
 ‘ whom I find possess’d of it.” Marus
 pretended rapture in return for Sylvia’s
 pretended good opinion. The whole ce-
 remony was determined at the same
 meeting in which it was named ; lawyers
 were sent for to draw up the proper set-
 tlements ; and the lady, who had no
 more mind that any thing should cross
 the run of her good fortune than the
 lover, if we may call him by such a
 name, was easily prevailed with to stay
 the drawing up of a proper instrument ;
 the signing of which should engage them
 to make the proper contracts in form ;
 and when that was done to have the rest
 of the form compleated by the ordinary.
 Sylvia was marry’d ; and the bride-
 groom as earnest for the consummation,
 and as much in terror about succeeding
 cross accidents, as the lady, press’d what
 was not refus’d. The master of the
 prison

prison was call'd, on some frivolous occasion into the bedchamber of his prisoner, and there were witnesses of every part of the ceremony.

Sylvia could not, with any degree of satisfaction, press the bed of pleasure while it was in a prison. She rose; she flew to the magistrate; she took with her the lawyer, who had given her assurance on the success of her letter; she produc'd that letter, and she insisted on the prisoner's being admitted to bail. The number of other letters from the deceas'd, which she produced, and which were all in the same hand writing, and all in the same manner: his known intimacy with her, and all the circumstances of his death, pleaded for the request, and it was not to be deny'd. The magistrate is always on the side of the richest, provided there is any appearance at all for it: he sent for Marus from the prison; he heard his story with attention; he found every part of it agreed with probability. He began to consider Marus as a man, who, independently of any principle of honesty or honour, would have had more prudence than to kill a man in his own house; he sent for the person who had given evi-
dence

dence against him; he read to him the letter Sylvia had brought; he recounted the several circumstances; he browbeat this object of his resentment now as much as he had done the unfortunate Marus before; and on some looks, both from him and Sylvia, which promis'd that his good offices for them should not be unrewarded, he proceeded in a rougher voice, and with an indignation in his looks, to tell him, that he saw at that time he went beyond the exact truth, and he now charged him, as he valued the peace of his eternal soul, and as he should expect to be dealt with at the judgment seat above for his own offences, to consider the injury he had done this unhappy gentleman, who was plainly innocent, and would appear so on his trial; to be candid now, to confess that he had been mistaken in certain circumstances before, and to withdraw that part of his evidence. Marus assured the fellow he forgave him, protested that he believed he did, from a firm belief that he was guilty, not from any malice to him, and put a bank note of a hundred pounds into his hands as a reward for his honesty. The justice told him it was more than he deserv'd, and acquir'd new spirit at the sight: he
assur'd

assur'd him there would be no danger to himself in withdrawing a part of what he had said in the hurry, now he had had time for farther recollection. The fellow unfwore all he had sworn that had any relation to Marus, and the accus'd was admitted to bail.

The circumstances were now so very clear that Marus was never brought to a trial: but as the town had been full of his imprisonment, they were not more astonished at his obtaining his liberty. All who had been concerned at the former event were rejoiced at this: about a dozen people. But while they concern'd themselves only in the incident, the rest of the world were busy'd to discover the means. The magistrate had been entreated to be secret on that head, under circumstances that had a strong claim to his compliance, and it was not easy to know from what other quarter the truth could be sought with any prospect of success. What people despair of obtaining by industry often comes by accident. There are always a set of the half-penny-history writers about the region of crimes and of confession. Though the master of the prison, and all about him, had

had been fee'd high to hold their tongues, some of their attendants had been let into the secret. A newgate marriage was too new and too strange a thing to escape the pen of the half-sheet authors; and what people were enquiring after every where, in vain, faced them at their doors and windows, under the title of "The lady of quality's visit to the poor prisoner in newgate," with a cut representing the ordinary performing the office, and the turnkey giving her away.

What is there that curiosity will not snatch at as a means of satisfying its appetite! If this eager passion could have wanted efficacy in the present case, there was a more powerful and more universal one, malice to assist it. Every body bought, every body read, and though not one of the number believed, every body propagated the story. If they were thus earnest in the relation while they had no guess, nor the least hint to lead them to a guess who the lady was, what was their encreased violence when they saw that woman was the hated Sylvia? From the time of the release of Marus, the happy pair had shut themselves up in private lodgings, and were entering on a

scheme of great reserve, in order to reconcile the World to their characters. Sylvia, who after she had lost the countenance and protection of her sex, found what that loss was, no longer thought it irrecoverable now. She recollected the marry'd mistress of one man of fashion, the mistress of the town marry'd to another, the meanest as well as the most infamous exalted to rank, and received as if they had been born to it. She, with justice, set herself above all these; she saw her own character, as it was, rather suspected than blown, and she found it easy to persuade herself that the same step, which had introduced these people to the world, would reconcile her to it.

It is easy, in making up an account, to forget a single article or two. Sylvia, who had been perfectly right in all the rest, had forgot that in these instances the rank and character of the husband demanded the regard which was paid to the wife; and that the lady had in all of them been unknown, not being a former acquaintance. It might be easy for her sex to receive a person whom they had never been upon any terms with before; but it was impossible for them ever to be

be well with one whom they had insulted and injured. There was a farther consideration also, but that did not come under examination. The conduct of the wife in all these cases has countenanced the civilities of the world, and it is properly in every one of them an honour to the man who has reclaimed a person to virtue; it is a credit to the sex that a person so reclaim'd is in no danger of falling back into error; and it is virtue to countenance the return to goodness. It is extremely to be suspected, whether the ungovernable temper of Sylvia would have suffer'd her to add one to the number of these reform'd for any continuance; but she was not put to the trial. During the few days of her retirement she had entrusted some of the most favour'd of her former acquaintance with the secret of her being marry'd to a man of fortune, though she conceal'd his name; and had press'd them to visit her, and to introduce her into the world again. When people forfeit the opinion of the world by accident it is sometimes restor'd to them; when they boldly and insolently give it up, it never is. Such was the case of Sylvia. Without the assistance of the forbidding circumstance of knowing to whom she

was marry'd, every one, in consequence of her own conduct only, refus'd to see her. She repeated the trial; she found the repulse repeated. What was she to do! desperate and enrag'd at once, she determin'd to brazen out that public which she could not influence by gentler methods. While all was eagerness and expectation on the part of those few to whom Sylvia had written to know who was the husband; while all was impatience in those who had read, and who had propagated that story of the new-gate marriage, to know who was the wife; the finest chariot that had been seen for many ages appear'd at all the public places of airing, and every other rendezvous; and in it Marus and Sylvia. The men laugh'd; the women scream'd their exclamations; the happy pair smiled superior in the two corners of the chariot,

If there were no women who would be seen with Sylvia, there were few men who would walk with Marus. There is no wisdom like that which makes a virtue of necessity: Marus abus'd the custom of the world, which makes a man ashamed of being seen with his wife in public, and determin'd to set the bad age

an example. He appear'd tete a tete with his bride ; they walk'd the round together ; they drank tea together ; and, as if the world was determin'd to support the laudable example, no creature ever join'd them. What had kindled the indignation of Sylvia at first, now became her pride and triumph ; she turned up her nose at every woman who pass'd her near enough to see it ; she spoke loud as she approach'd any party, where one of them was liable to scandal ; and as there was a smartness in her manner, she did not fail, under the provocation which the general slight gave her, to point every thing she said with a cutting severity. As the world seem'd determin'd to keep themselves at a distance, she resolv'd to place them at a greater. Full of her stately resentment she would never suffer any one, in the most croud'd part of the room, to separate her lover and her ; and she stuck pins at the sides of her cloaths to tear the aprons of those who had the insolence to brush too closely by her. When she sat down to tea she assum'd an air of more importance and severity. Her acquaintance with the polite world, in the former years of her life, had let her into the secret histories of all

the people who made any degree of figure in it now ; and as there are few people who have not had, either in their own conduct, or in that of some of their family, at some time, something that would not wish to hear reported, she never fail'd to entertain her companion with some observations of this kind that regarded the people in the adjoining boxes ; and to speak it in such a manner that it should be heard. If the people were unknown to her, it was fifty to one but they were new in town, and some awkwardnesses in their dress and manner gave her opportunity of exerting her talents. Hated by all the world, she return'd that hatred tenfold ; and as she never suppress'd the worst natured things she could say, and seldom saw a person on whose account she could not find some opportunity of saying them ; she kept the two or three next places to that where she sat always empty, and at length became avoided in so careful a manner, partly through hatred and partly through fear, that it was not easy for her to be seen within hearing of any of her own sex. What Marus would have supposed an infamy worse than death, Sylvia was hardened enough to enjoy, as the result,
and

and so indeed in part it was, of her own choice and study. She arrived at what she seem'd to design, that of appearing among other people like a creature of a different species. To this will imprudence lead; this will obstinacy perfect. Terrible as this situation must have appeared to all but her who felt it, 'tis the natural consequence of that single, that irrevocable step of despising the world.

While Marus and Sylvia passed their time thus solitarily in public, they were not without company in private: tho' the women all avoided the lady, the husband had people of his own stamp who dined with him, drank with him, and were as noisy and riotous as people who are merry. It is not only natural, it is unavoidable, that we associate with those who fall continually in our way. Sylvia had always preferred the company of men to that of her own sex; and these, though of a different stamp from all she had been before acquainted with, became familiar by custom. From a dread and horror of their conversation, she began by degrees to smile at the absurdity of it. From bearing it, she became familiar with it;

and, in fine, she fell into it. She drank, she swore, she blasphem'd; as they did; they swore her the only conversible creature that nature ever put into petticoats; and she was honoured with the title of The Female Buck, among all the people of spirit, and toasted upon the knee ten times a night at every gaming tavern in town.

From joining their parties in town, she went on their country expeditions: she was never absent at a Newmarket meeting. Epfom was not Epfom if Sylvia did not appear at it; and in fine, wherever there was play, there was Sylvia.

From a sensible and agreeable woman, as she had been in the earlier part of her life, she now was become what she had long affected to be, a creature of a quite different species from the rest of the world; what prostitution had begun, avarice had improv'd, and resentment had perfected: there only wanted the habit to speak a change of sex in Sylvia. Her face was tann'd with the sun, and purpled with the grape; her voice was become hoarse and rough, fit for the execrations and oaths it was continually pronouncing; and

and her hands, her stride, her air, all became, not only manly, but like the coarsest kind of men; the thieves and cut-throats, for softer terms would not do them justice, with whom she conversed.

The addition of her fortune to that of Marus had set them out on a very considerable footing; and the application with which he pursued the means of improving it, did not let it remain in the same dull situation. There were times at which it would have made but a poor figure in comparison with what it was at their marriage, but for the generality it was much more considerable. There will be fluctuations in the affairs of a man of this condition; but if it could be set at any thing certain, the fortune of Marus, five years after his marriage, could not be less than fifteen thousand pounds more than he found himself possessed of on the acquisition of his wife's fortune. The money which is won by this set of people is seldom obtained by trading on a single stock; nor had it been so with Marus. The joint adventurers, though each has his particular capital, play the game into each other's hands, and the bubbles are

shar'd among them. There is a pitch of affluence under which men break the bands of this kind of society. When there is a want of other food, pike will prey on one another; so much has been often observ'd, but 'tis not only when there is this want that they will do it. No laws can subsist amongst the rapacious; and as the fish will destroy its kind, not only when no other food, but when no better food, is in the way; so these beasts of prey will, whenever it is worth while, destroy one another: the difference is, that increase of bulk, when arrived to a certain degree, protects the fish from its brother destroyers, but 'tis this very increase which makes the man the subject of it. When the gamester has accumulated so much that he disdains the association under the influence of which he obtained it; he becomes, on the same principle, no longer a rook but a bubble; the whole herd whom he has deserted look on him as a victim, as well as an enemy; and, like the savages of America, pursue the war with a redoubled eagerness, from the hope of eating those whom they shall conquer.

Sylvia

Sylvia, whose temper had always been mercenary, pursued her old conduct, tho' she had no farther occasion for it. She found her husband too devoted to other cares to leave him any room for suspicion; she found herself among a set of people, who, if they had none of the gentleness of the human heart, were not divested of its passions; and who, if they want that persuasion which usually hangs on the tongue of love, had the more prevailing, the irresistible eloquence of generosity; irresistible even to her, who was placed in a state beyond its rational influence. She was courted in their way with the eloquence of the yellow Jachimo, as Shakespear paints it, by them all; all had an equal claim to her attention; all paid; and all succeeded. The money they gave her at one visit, they generally won back at the next; and often the payment of a debt serv'd in the place of receiving a gratuity. The husband sometimes star'd at the stakes she ventur'd, but as he was too intent on his own play to mind any body else, he supposed she had won what he saw her lose; and while the whole party knew they had her in common, the husband

supposed she was a vestal. It was impossible Sylvia could foresee that she should live to want the money which she squander'd as infamously as she had obtain'd it: if she could have suspected it, possibly she would not have got so much to lay by, as she found it easy to have, in order to lose it.

Such was the situation of the affairs of the party, when Marus, with more than fifty thousand pounds, appear'd to the people whom he began to neglect in his schemes on others, himself a person worthy to be the object of such a scheme. It was laid, and it was executed. If such things were foreseen, they could not be obviated without more address, and more resolution, than any man of this turn ever possessed. It would be necessary, to avoid the destruction, if not totally to decline play, at least to be limited to certain sums, and to except against certain people. These are resolutions so obviously necessary, that they are often made, but they are always broken. In this case there was no suspicion, and there was therefore no motive for the entering on them.

What-

Whatever is done of this kind against one who knows the play, must be done at once. It was determined that one stroke should begin and end the fate of Marus. The whole association join'd the scheme: they attacked him after dinner at his own house:— they sat up till seven the next morning: and Marus, on making up the account of his ill luck, found he was not worth quite so much as he had lost. Marus had won deep stakes often enough to know what was the consequence of winning them. Nobody would lose sight of him till he had given bond and judgment for the money; and they took their leaves of him with that sort of triumph which men of this turn always look upon the wretch whom they have ruin'd. Sylvia was in bed. One would drop a tear to any wife but Sylvia, who went to sleep possessed of fifty thousand pounds, and wak'd without a fixpence. She star'd with a wild astonishment. She made him repeat the names of those who had destroy'd him: and, deep as she was in the iniquities of the world, would scarce believe that they were the people whom

whom she had cause to think would have some regard to her.

No person ever was so sudden in resolution as Sylvia; few ever made them so prudently. She told him, if it was necessary, that he sacrificed his character or his whole fortune, the alternative was easy. She led him to a lord chief justice; she made him obtain the proper warrants: it was easy to find people who were at that time all in their beds. They were brought together, the obligations were cancelled as illegal, and the fortune of Marus was restored to him, by the prudence of his wife; within two hours of the time when she had notice of his having lost it.

If the glorious couple had before been given up by all people but the gamesters, it was easy to see in what light they must, after this, appear to those.—London was no place for them to remain longer in, not England could protect them from insult; the determination was, to spend three or four years in splendor in the south of France, and when the story should be in some degree forgotten, to sit down in a remote part of England and enjoy the remainder of their lives in
tranqui-

tranquility. The disturbance of mind which Marus had undergone from the last accident, render'd the thought of retirement and ease doubly agreeable to him. He swore upon his knees to observe punctually every part of the plan. It was not their business to throw themselves into the way of insults, they did not return home, they took post-chaise for Dover, and they left letters for a trusty person to take the necessary care of their affairs, and follow them.

It was now only that Sylvia thought herself set out for the land of real happiness. They dined with great satisfaction, with a satisfaction of a new kind: they pursued their journey after it was dark: they were talking over the adventures of the day when the discharge of a pistol and the fall of the postillion alarm'd them. They had not time to speak; they were surrounded by a party, two of whom advancing apply'd their pistols close to the heads of each and discharg'd them.

The voice of the postillion was the first signal of life among them; it raised the eyes of Sylvia, whom the fright had
thrown

thrown into a swoon, and thro' whose hair two bullets had pass'd without hurting her. The postillion, whom the first pistol had miss'd, had pretended death in order to escape it. It was in vain the flattering imagination of Sylvia expected as much in Marus, the bullets had penetrated his skull and dispatch'd him on the moment. The widow return'd to London, she apply'd to the same judge before whom she had succeeded so happily in her former application. It was easy to infer, that the people who had been disappointed of their expectations from his fortune had been those whose revenge had murther'd him; but, prepared for the suspicion, they had proofs, if not of their innocence, yet of their cunning, ready: they had either employ'd others to perform their designs, or they had used some strange delusion to impose on others, for it appear'd on such abundant testimony that they were all at another place, and among a mix'd company at the time, that it was impossible to commit them even for farther examination.

The widow was settling her house and calling together her lawyers and attendants, envied perhaps more than she had been

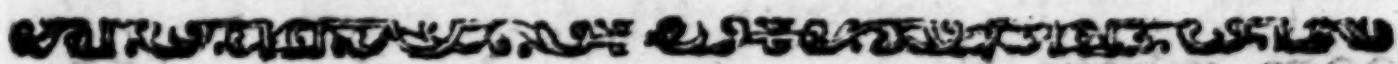
been in any former situation, and enjoying herself on the prospect of such a life of liberty and affluence, when a very unexpected claim appear'd, a former wife, whom Marus had kept all these years at a very considerable allowance, laid in her pretensions to the whole. She treated Sylvia as a strumpet that had usurp'd her place and title too long: she talked of the newgate marriage in terms such as were proper for such a subject: and she produced, with the certificate of her marriage, abundant proof that it was celebrated in the most authentic manner: she brought the trustees to her separate maintenance to prove that it had been allow'd her many years before, to stop a prosecution which she had begun against him for cruelty; and she gave a fair account of the augmentation that it had receiv'd, and the promise of secrecy that had been exacted from her on account of her submitting to his living with another woman, who, as he wrote her word, had the means of his life in her hands, and would not employ them in his service on any other conditions.

The story was evidently a reality: it appeared that the unfortunate wife had brought

brought him a handsome fortune ; that very fortune on which he had set out in the gamester's profession. Every body pitied her misfortunes, every body congratulated with her on the recovery of her happiness. She set the story of the late marriage in a very idle light ; nor could it indeed be proved, the ordinary who had perform'd the office was dead ; the master of the prison had also submitted to the same fate ; the hurry of the occasion had tempted Marus to bribe high for its being done without a licence and the common forms ; and all that could be produced towards the proving it had ever been solemnized, was a single person who had been let into the room in which they were in bed together.

Thus were the golden hopes and expectations of Sylvia destroy'd at an instant. Thus it is that vice deserts its votaries, even those whom it has most favoured. Sylvia, that Sylvia who had blaz'd in jewels, and outdone the most profuse of the nobility in extravagance at her table, was in a moment let down from the height of her fortune to the nothingness from which she had arisen to it. In a dispute with her greatest benefactor,

factor, who was now dead, she had thrown his settlement in the fire ; and the insolence of prosperity had taught her such contempt for those others to whom she had been oblig'd, that there was not a friend left to her in her necessity. She found herself reduced to an annuity of twenty-five pounds a year, which she had purchased from the bounty of Curtius, and on this she now breathes, unknown and under another name, in a village in the north-riding of Yorkshire.



HISTORY XII.

MIsfortunes do not happen to those only who deserve them. Distress of as severe a kind as can become the lot of human nature, may be the portion of those who are guilty of no crimes ; they may be the result of obstinate virtue, even in those who are the immediate, though involuntary causes of them. In scenes like these, heaven gives to those whom it approves an opportunity of exerting the greatest of all human and of all christian virtues, resignation ; and points them to their reward beyond the grave.

Among

Among the persons who had been called upon to give evidence before the judge, of the persons accused of the murder of Marus having been in London at the time when it was perpetrated, was the agreeable, the virtuous Cynthio. 'Tis always unhappy to be seen in ill company or to appear in an ill cause; but 'tis not always criminal. Cynthio had no acquaintance with any of them; but as a man of character he was named as having been present in the same coffee-room where they were at the time. He could not refuse to appear: when before the seat of enquiry he could not answer otherwise than as truth directed. He join'd his testimony to the exculpating of persons evidently guilty, tho' out of the reach of proof; and the censure of abetting, or at least of protecting them, fell upon the innocent.

The judge, at whose house Cynthio had been called on this occasion, had a daughter, a woman of merit and of beauty. Cynthio had read a horror in her face at the nature of the crime that had been perpetrated, and a tenderness and compassion to the widow, which had strongly

strongly recommended her to his heart. It was no time to declare himself on such a subject : he had taken the precaution to make himself particular to her, which was all that he could do, and in the evening he had written, not to the lady but to her father.

Cynthio's fortune was considerable, his character unexceptionable; but the father, full of detestation at the crime that had been committed, and as full of indignation at the cunning which had screen'd those who perpetrated it from justice, was implacable against all that had assisted in it whatever way. It was in vain that Cynthio explained the manner of his being led into the evidence : it was plain that he had been one of the principal occasions of their escaping ; and the judge, who to his natural honesty had a natural warmth of temper in an uncommon degree, was outrageous at the insult passed upon his family, by a man who had just appear'd in so infamous a light before him, and who the next moment attempted an alliance with his daughter.—He call'd in the lady, and with all the vehemence of rage and resentment, insisted on her

her answering such a confident villain as he deserved.

Flavia, who had not been blind to the soft looks of the stranger, who had been impatient to hear some explanation of them, was ready to sink into the earth with the surprize of his having so suddenly, and in so honourable a manner, declared himself; and with the rigour of her father, who commanded her to sacrifice an offer which promised her so much happiness. She pleaded for the innocence and virtues of the young gentleman, on no better a foundation than her having read them in his face. She exclaimed on the severity and injustice of her father when she saw the letter: she conjured him to suffer his eyes to be open to the innocence of a man who probably did honour to the family in the offer he made; whose pretensions were certainly worth enquiring into; whose open and generous manner of making his address had invited, instead of evading that enquiry; whose person she confess'd herself to have observed with eyes of partiality; and whose innocence, as to the suspicion of countenancing or abetting, or of so much as knowing the persons who

who had been the occasion of his coming thither ; she was convinced, she was certain, was as great as her own. ‘ If you regard your own honour, my lord, said she, treat with candour a man whom only a wrong passion, though from the most justifiable cause, induces you to believe guilty : if you regard the peace of your daughter, for wild as the declaration may appear to you, I must confess I must glory in being concern’d for a man of worth, whom I have only once seen ; give me a chance of being happy. See him, see him without prepossession or resentment ; tax him to the utmost with this supposed fault ; enquire with the strictest scrutiny into his character and his affairs. If he be criminal where you suppose, he will be odious to me as he is to you : if but his circumstances are unequal, hard as the condition is, I do protest upon my knees I promise you, to obey your commands whatsoever they may be concerning him. I will take no rash step in a matter of this importance ; I will take no step that shall appear rash to your better judgment, when view’d without passion : but in return for this, my lord, my father, do not, in a flight of
‘ anger,

‘ anger, refuse me what may deserve
‘ your approbation, and what has mine ;
‘ what has already so much right in me,
‘ that only your finding it unworthy the
‘ regard I pay can dispossess it.’

So eloquent is love, so free and extensive is the female genius, when it has been favour’d and encourag’d by a wise education : but, alas ! so headstrong is passion, so obstinate is age, and so sacred and inviolable is held the prerogative of a father, that reasons, which, if they could have been heard, would have lost all their force as aim’d in rebellion against that prerogative, were urg’d in vain to ears obdurately clos’d against them, and found no efficacy against a heart prepossess’d by false suspicions, exasperated by what appear’d an insolence to his understanding. He renew’d the proposal, and enrag’d to find a child, in whom he had hitherto met only with obedience, disputing his authority, and giving way to a romantic, and, as it appear’d to him, to an infamously directed tenderness ; he commanded her once more to her knees ; he demanded an oath from her never to see, hear, or have any connection or acquaintance with the man who had misled her.

She

sands of avarice, into the peaceful haven. 'Tis hard that the vices and follies of mankind should be protected, while their virtues starve them; but this is too much the case in the world, and it was that of Amoris. Vice may be useful. 'Tis not the virtuous always who have the care and command of our fortunes. The greatest baseness that could have brought advantage to the youth, would have pleaded for the protection, the encouragement, and the reward of his uncle's whole power and fortune; his virtues ruin'd him.

He was press'd by his patron to get rid of his dependent Zanthé; he promised to do it instantly. The uncle sent him a remittance, by which he might be enabled to do it with a good grace; and the sum served excellently for the pretence of what could not be executed in reality. The lady disappear'd; only Amoris knew where she was: and Amoris, though at least half his hours were spent with her, did not give room for the least suspicion that he saw her. The uncle came to town; he was perfectly satisfied; he was charm'd with the youth's behaviour in so

critical and difficult a juncture. He was introduced to the lady in form; the honourable trenches were open'd, and the siege was not like to be tedious, where the garrison were so much in the mind to surrender.

It was the business of Amoris, while he seem'd to push his fortune with the utmost earnestness, to take as much pains to blast his own pretended designs. The first part of the scheme was executed by himself, the other by his emissaries. There was not a vile thing man could be guilty of which he did not find the means to be accused of in his absence; but 'twas all to no purpose: half of what was said, the fond Celinda would not be brought to believe, the other half she thought rather to his advantage; she look'd upon exploits contrived on purpose to be told her, as proofs of that spirit which she admired in a man, and as instances of that happy freedom which had charms for her beyond all other human qualifications. When this did not succeed, the lover pretended a sudden coldness; and he gave her occasion to suspect him in a wrong place. Celinda had discernment;

cernment; she saw all this was of his own concerting: it was impossible she could guess at his intent in it; but she rallied him on his insolence, and paid no more regard to what she saw himself contrived on purpose for her seeing it, than she had done to what she did not perceive owed its origin to the same source while she heard it from others.

Many a man would have found all endeavours to be well with Celinda fruitless; it was the more than equal distress of Amoris to find nothing could make him ill with her. She could not suppose any man could, in reality, hold her person and her fortune so cheap as to wish to lose her; and she lov'd the saucy fellow who dar'd pretend indifference and humble her with the disguise of wishing to be rid of her. In this light Celinda saw every step taken by Amoris, and every report spread by those imaginary enemies, which he had rais'd to answer his purposes: in this light, every step he took to destroy his scheme promoted it. The trembling Zanthé heard every night the ill success of the day's attempt, and she died with apprehension. She who

knew the merit of her husband could not wonder that another should discover it. She who was conscious that no power, no advantage, could have torn her from him, could too readily conceive that no pretence, no disparity of fortune, of temper, or even of inclination, could make another give him up. She saw the advancing ruin even before he saw it. She expected what happen'd. She foresaw that the woman, who would by no artifices be debarr'd from him, would not delay the making him her own. Celinda acted as Zanthé had expected; in the secret of their own inclinations the sex always guess well at the determinations of one another. The uncle was sent for to town; the lady profess'd her continued approbation of her pretended lover; she laugh'd at his modesty that had not press'd the naming of a day, and, with a very low curtsy, ask'd him if to-morrow would be agreeable to him. It was very necessary for him to counterfeit the most violent rapture on this occasion; he had been too much used to dissimulation to find that difficult. The uncle and the lady were both perfectly deceived. The council was sent for on the matter of
the

the settlements, and he relieved the lover from the most absolute despair, by declaring that a week was as short a time as could possibly be allow'd for preparing the engagements that should fix their future signing the proper settlements.

Amoris reviv'd, the lady was thoroughly out of humour: the event gave the lover new spirits for dissimulation, and he continued his deceit so dexterously, that both his mistress and his uncle were in pain for his distress, at being thrown from so immediate a prospect of happiness. Zanthé shared all the terrors of the first scene, and the story of the short reprieve were related to her. There was a week to try over all the arts of aversion: and Amoris, who had so often experienced the effects of them without designing it, that it was not difficult for him to practice over, now they could be of use, all the means of mischief by which he had often suffer'd. He play'd them all, and all without success; he pretended attachments in other places; Celinda laugh'd at him: he made the world report he was going to be married to her; she thought it was so, and was in no

pain about its being known. He affected inconstancy of temper, and she told him if it were real he would take pains to hide it; and she saw indifference, as she imagined, through the thin disguise.

‘ You are too modest, she would say,
 ‘ dear Amoris. We have changed parts.
 ‘ You are the lady, I am the lover. But
 ‘ ’tis very well, you know there ought
 ‘ to be courtship on one side, and you
 ‘ are resolved it shall be on mine. Be
 ‘ coy, be fantastical, pretend in-
 ‘ constancy, and be accused of falshood; I
 ‘ who act the part of the man on this
 ‘ theatre, know what is meant by all those
 ‘ arts of women. Pursue them, and let
 ‘ us keep up the farce ’till Friday; I am
 ‘ afraid you’ll make me change hands
 ‘ afterwards.’

Such was the behaviour of a woman, fond of the man whom she supposed as fond of her; who, ignorant of the cause of his aversion, could not suppose it real. All his evasions served but to give her new power; and so perverse is the sex, that she who in another would have taken the most honest passion for dissimulation, now construed the real dictates of coldness

coldness and distaste into fondness. All the weapons the lover employ'd turn'd their edge upon himself; the day approach'd, the sentence was unalterable. The lady was determined to keep her resolves; and the intended husband, himself only conscious that it was impossible he should ever be so in reality, gave up the helm, and left the vessel to be wreck'd at fortune's pleasure.

Despair, after such a succession of fruitless attempts, was not to be accused of weakness. Zanthé compassionated, but she could not blame it. The task devolved on her. Ignorant of all the arts of dissimulation, she determin'd on the simple truth. She wrote to his uncle; she confess'd herself his wife; she took upon herself all the blame of that act. “ I
 “ married your nephew, sir, not from
 “ his concurrence, but through my sol-
 “ licitations. He told me he depended
 “ upon you; he told me he must have
 “ your approbation whenever he enter'd
 “ in that important engagement. I sol-
 “ licited, I entreated; I prevail'd upon
 “ his good-nature, though not upon his
 “ reason, to do what he would have de-
 L. 4 “ clined.

“clined. O, sir, when you remember
“with what resignation I have borne the
“loss of character, of friends, and all
“the world, rather than betray him to
“your displeasure, you will be satisfied
“that nothing in the headlong act was
“other than mine. Be pleased, sir, to
“understand me rightly. I do not write
“to you to prevent this happy, this ad-
“vantageous marriage; I would pro-
“mote it. I have no right in the man
“whom I claim’d, no longer than while
“I kept the fatal secret which gave him
“to me. I divulge it; I renounce all
“title to his person, to his esteem, even
“to his remembrance. I ask of you,
“sir, your advice; you are interested;
“your paternal tenderness to the man
“I have has interested you in his con-
“cerns, and you will give it me. I
“promised, when I enter’d in this fatal
“union with him, that it should be no
“way to his disadvantage. It is. The
“engagement is broken; and the con-
“tract, in equity, falls with it. I am
“willing to give up that to which I
“have no farther right. I request of
“you, as you love that man whom you
“have hitherto patronised, who deserves,
“and

“ and who will continue to deserve that
 “ favour and that fondness, that you
 “ will point out to me the means of
 “ a divorce. I will submit to it with-
 “ out a tear; and, content with my
 “ fate, will allow I have purchased a
 “ life of misery at the worthiest price,
 “ when I remember how long I have
 “ been happy.

“ ZANTHE.

The only man, perhaps, on earth on which a letter like this could have had no effect was him to whom it was directed. Impatient of the discovery, he was deaf to the offer'd advantage. He saw the lady with whom his engagements were made too high in rank and character to submit to any terms of so dishonourable a kind; perhaps he saw himself also in a more favourable light. He recollected the great deal he was doing for a nephew, and was, perhaps, glad of an excuse to evade it. Whatever were the motives, the event was final. He wrote to Celinda that his nephew was a rascal, a fellow who would no longer have his countenance, nor deserved her's. To the expecting Zanthé he returned no answer;

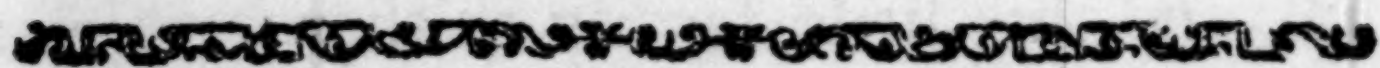
but the same post brought to his nephew his last line, in which he gave him up for ever ; nor could the entreaty of his friends, nor his own conduct afterwards ever reconcile him.

Amoris would not believe his fortune so desperate as it appear'd to him ; ignorant that all his patron's views had tended to the aggrandizing of his family by his means : so little of the Irishman, as not to know the pursuit of schemes of this kind to be the genius of the country, the thing which they all feel with the warmth of fathers and of brothers ; he did not distinguish that in the utter subversion of this plan he had given up all his pretences to future favour ; he continu'd to solicit and to expect it ; he wrote continually, but the uncle was inexorable ; he receiv'd no answers to his letters ; no return to the solicitations which he engag'd his friends to make : he was not without money when the discovery was made ; the sum that he had given to Zanthé, by the express order of his patron, was not inconsiderable. This assisted the scheme, which was begun with his own, the supporting themselves till the man, from whom he
had

had been used to receive support, should comply with their solicitations, and receive them into favour. It was a vain hope, and the dependance on the expectation ruin.

The credit, which people, used to be well paid, were ready to give Amoris, contributed to the catastrophe: he found his expectations frustrated, his debts great, his fortune nothing; he had no resource but his native country. With difficulty it was he found the means to convey himself and his little family thither: it was with despair that he found his father's doors shut against him. The uncle had wrote over his reasons for discarding him; he had recounted his favours to him; he had told the offer'd advantage; and the father, satisfy'd with his reasons, was as inexorable as himself. The sight of a wife, who had disappointed all the former schemes for his advancement, urg'd the resentment farther: he never found the means of obtaining the slightest favour or support from him; he would have put a period to his distresses by ending his life, but that a wife, a daughter, pleaded for his assistance. Be it what it might, he re-

collected, that in his first preparation for that study, which he had never after prosecuted, he had been taught the necessary hands. What he had refus'd as the means of his preferment prov'd that of his bread; and the gay and splendid Amoris, the delight of the women, the envy of the men, the pride of every place where he had appear'd, starv'd the remainder of his life on the poor profits that could be made from writing for attornies.



HISTORY XXIII.

THE fate of a whole family often depends on that of one of the persons. It was thus in that of the unhappy wife of the unhappy Amoris: that lady had a sister younger, but not less agreeable than herself. The mother, whose whole care had been employ'd in the education, whose whole soul was laid out in hopes and fears for both, was the widow of a dignified clergyman, of great note for his piety, but less for his œconomy. It is wonderful, that men, who preach

preach the virtues so emphatically, who practice them in other points so regularly, should have so general a neglect of their nearest ties; but 'tis frequent to see the wife and children of a man, whom all the world respected, distressed after his death, while in his life nothing would have been so easy as to have provided for their future necessities, unless it were to have foreseen them.

The rank the widow had maintain'd in the world made her a very numerous acquaintance; and a part of them continu'd her the honour of their countenance and regard, when she could no longer plead the fashionable title to it. By their interest, and a candid representation of her distress, she obtained the pension for the support of clergymen's widows, amounting, (oh shame to speak it!) to four pounds ten shillings a year. By their interest, and her own virtues and distress, she obtained a place in a public donation disposed by the ministry; and by these assistances to industry, with their needles at hours when it was not seen the little family obtained the means of life, and of a decent appearance. The morning

morning was devoted to the necessities of the family. It was an universal rule to see nobody in those hours ; and after the rising with the sun, and employing themselves till four in the afternoon, they spent the remainder of the day, that is to say, all the day of the public and fashionable world, in all those indulgencies and enjoyments which might be had without expence. The places of musical entertainment were prohibited by the price and distance ; but the park, and many other places of resort, were open ; and their own tea-table was often well furrounded, and they were the most acceptable guests at that of many others.

The world is generally in the secret of every body's affairs in this town. It was known that the little family, whom every body esteemed, whom every body pitied, had very little to support the appearance they made, though that never amounted to more than was to be express'd by the term decent ; and every body respected them for preserving that appearance on such conditions. The daughters were too agreeable to escape the
general

general observation. Every body talk'd of them; every fool sigh'd, and said soft things as he pass'd by them in public; and every man of sense and honour trembled for them, as he saw their situation, their accomplishments, and the temptations to which they would be expos'd. It has been the custom among the gay world of this class, to attract the eye by singularity of dress. These girls, who had imbibed all their principles from the prudence of the mother, knew that it was not their business to be conspicuous in a thing in which they could not excel; and whenever they appear'd there was, notwithstanding, a neatness, a cleanness of look, peculiar to themselves: a plainness and simplicity in all about them that was yet more peculiar. The mother always was abroad with them; and tho' numbers were eager to speak a passion of one kind or other to them, partly the presence of that guardian, and partly the stronger guard of their own modest reserve, forbid it.

The eyes of many were upon them; and the first offer they should receive was to characterise the future life and authorize

authorize pretensions. The women do not always see the importance of such an incident ; perhaps even all the care and prudence of these did not represent it in the due importance ; but what that did not, their virtue was sure to accomplish. Without foreseeing the ruin of both the daughters, from but an approach of a false step from one, the mother would have perish'd, the daughters would more than have perish'd, before they would have heard a breath of impropriety.

It was not only that the nature of an offer would characterise the succeeding life of her to whom it was made, the circumstance of the person who should make it would also be of vast importance to both. The fortunes of Amoris stood on so fair a footing in the eye of the world, that his addresses countenanced those of any other man of fashion ; and it was not long before the other sister had offers as important and as honourable from many parties at once. The widow saw the girls dazzled with their promising fortune ; she saw the hazards of so capricious a foundation of happiness as love afforded ; she

she saw the dangers which might attend the most promising security, and she guarded them against it. To the lady whom Amoris address'd it was not necessary, convinced that he was what he appear'd, assur'd that his intentions were what they declared themselves, he was received without suspicion or reserve. Others pretended the same merit, but with less right to it ; and though no man would, for his own sake, attempt in an open manner to delude the sister of the lady to whom Amoris was about to be married, there were many who would have been glad to use the covering of an honourable design to countenance their purposes.

In the height of the addresses of the gallant Amoris, the ladies had pass'd some hours of a very bright evening in Kensington gardens. The sister of Zante, tho' scarce less accomplish'd, and the equally agreeable Amelia, had staid behind her mother and that lady to read some lovesick ditty on the back of one of the seats. A gentleman, a man of figure and polite deportment, stept in as he saw her employ'd in reading, and had hardly claim'd

claim'd a right in the lines she was honouring with her attention, when the rest of the party came back. The mother of the two beauties was not one of those, who, under the notion of modesty, banish every politeness by a false reserve: she found the stranger conversing with her daughter; and, as he follow'd them out, and continued the subject, she did not think it necessary to shake him off with rudeness.

Acquaintances of the utmost importance are often began by the most trivial accidents. Whether the person who had introduced himself to Amelia's acquaintance was or was not the author of the verses, they gave him a very happy opportunity of displaying his abilities. They were evidently written on some beauty who frequented the place; and as the things said on these occasions are like Bays's prologue and epilogue, that would serve for one play as well as another, it was easy to persuade her she was the object, and as easy to plead in favour of a distant, a despairing, and a hopeless passion. Lelius was a man of sense as well as fortune, he had been less devoted to gaiety than

than many of the people of his time of life; and to a woman of discernment, for, with all the youth of Amelia, the conversation of her mother and sister had given her that, his manner pleased the more as it had less of the common cant of courtship in it.

Lelius attended them thro' the Park; they begg'd he would not trouble himself farther; he saw they had no mind to be follow'd home, and he took his leave. The ladies had, early in their conversation with him, mention'd Amoris; he knew it would be easy for him, by his means, to find who his new acquaintance were; and he did not think it was worth while to risque the advances he had made, by pushing his attendance when he saw they wish'd to dispense with it, and when there was another way open to all the advantages of it. The men are not aware how every step in a new acquaintance, or in the offer to an acquaintance, is watch'd; if they were, they would be upon their guard in things, their oversights in which, trifles as they are, frustrate half their schemes. The ladies, when they consider'd the nature of the growing

growing intimacy, had no favourable opinion of any part of the conduct of the person who was for making it, except that of his leaving them at their request. This pleaded for him, and he in this missed the rock which so many split upon, of forfeiting all their pretensions by their own eagerness in making them.

Lelius had sense, honour, and a good fortune. He did not know Amoris more than by report, and by having seen him in public places; but he was glad of an opportunity of informing himself from the mouth of a man of so much honour of the nature of his new acquaintance. The knowledge was, as hinted, on the other side; and when Amoris in the evening was told of the conquest the little beauty had made, he could only answer, that he knew the name of Lelius very well, and knew that it belong'd to a man of fashion. In the morning he received the compliments of the person who had been the subject of their last conversation, and, in consequence of the answer he return'd, saw him in half an hour. Lelius apologiz'd for the frankness of his visit, but told him that he had fallen accidentally
in

in the way of a lady, whose family he found were known to him, and that before he proceeded to any farther acquaintance, he requested him, as the only person whom he knew that could do it, to tell him who she was. Amoris was very open and free to him: he told him that she had no fortune; but that there was not another qualification wanting of all that could have recommended her. He let him, in some degree, into the state of the family, and concluded with telling him; ‘ I met the other sister, sir, ‘ by such an accident as has thrown you ‘ into the way of this. I have found her, ‘ in all respects, what I have described ‘ to you the lady whom you have en- ‘ quired after. I don’t, concluded he, ‘ set myself up as a pattern for others; ‘ but you’ll pardon me if I tell you my ‘ sense of the matter by telling you my ‘ conduct in it. I make my addresses to ‘ the person I found so much reason to ‘ love and to esteem, and I hope she will ‘ in a very little time consent to marry ‘ me.’

Lelius was struck with the generosity of temper in his new acquaintance. He did

did not take a minute for the resolution; but reply'd, 'I also have a fortune, which does not render it necessary for me to court one with a wife. You have set a glorious example, and I shall not be wanting to follow it. You will know, continued Lelius, I cannot but be in earnest in this, when I desire you to introduce me into the family on these terms; and, concluded he, I shall receive this as the greatest favour ever conferr'd on me.'

Amoris had the prosperity of the family greatly at heart: he was charm'd with the declaration; he determined to be assiduous in promoting the interest and intentions of the lover, and he appointed the afternoon for the time of his visit. The man whom Amoris introduced was sure to be well received: the acquaintance commenced from this moment, and the mother saw every circumstance promise favourably for her daughters beyond her most sanguine expectations. The lovers visited together, and each served as a pattern to the other in their address. While Amoris kept up the face of an intended marriage, Lelius was pressing

sing

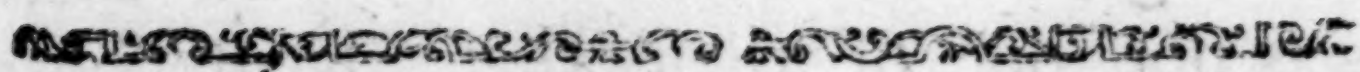
sing with his fair one for the same conditions. While the lover was an example to the one, the mistress was a pattern to the other. The younger follow'd the steps of the elder; and whatever was the resolution of Amoris and Zante, was that of Lelius and his admired.

While Amoris had intended nothing by his addresses; for such was the wild, the deceitful temper of Amoris, that he could be pressing, and dying, while he meant nothing, the proposal of a marriage was eternally in his mouth. When he grew serious in the resolution, it became necessary to talk less about it. Zante, when married to him, suffer'd herself to be understood as his mistress; the occasion was important, the obligations were sacred, and not the sister nor the mother were in the secret.

The event was fatal. The unhappy mother pin'd over the misfortune of her favourite child, and died of that most incurable of all diseases, a broken heart. The sister was left destitute and distress'd: the unfortunate Zante, frightened at the first shock of the general censure, had retir'd from

from it by running into the country. The unhappier girl, who had hitherto form'd her conduct and designs on hers, was in a manner left to the mercy of the man who had so long solicited her on the most honourable terms. Lelius would have married the sister of Amoris's wife, but it was impossible to marry the sister of Amoris's mistress. The girl started at the proposal which he immediately made; but necessity and example were too powerful arguments to be resisted. The lover urg'd his passion; the lady saw no prospect of a more estimable offer; she saw no means of even the necessaries of life, but by compliance.

She, who would have been the virtuous wife, became the abandoned mistress of a man, who slighted the easy conquest a week after he had made it. From his hands she passed to another, and another. Despair, too strong for prudence, threw her into every common misery; and while her sister lived miserably, she died yet more distressed, yet less compassionated.



HISTORY XXIV.

AMONG the few worthy and humane acquaintance of the father of Zanthé, who had continued their civilities to the family, when the situation of that family ennobled those civilities into beneficence, was the mother of the most amiable Clarissa. Clarissa was at that time less than twenty; she had been accustomed to examples of honour, and she had inherited a stock of virtue. The friendship of her mother, to the widow of the man they had esteem'd and revered, was not greater than that of the tender hearted daughter to his children. We naturally are attach'd to those who are in some degree like ourselves; and there was more than similarity of age, there was a resemblance of temper, manners and sentiments to recommend Zanthé and her sister and the charming Clarissa mutually to one another.

The civilities that might be done by one of Clarissa's fortune, to people of her

own age, were innumerable ; and there was not one of these that Clarissa was not as importunate to bestow as the others backward to receive. At public places Clarissa was the mistress of the ceremonies : if there was any little expence, it became all hers ; in private there was nothing that could be troublesome to them that she did not alleviate ; and what added with such minds infinitely to the obligation, there was a way Clarissa took of doing all this, which first prevented the occasion of the uneasiness, and afterwards the thanks.

In such a situation, with respect to these amiable girls, 'tis not a wonder that Clarissa was in all their secrets. There was one only that she did not know, the marriage of Zanthé ; the fatal secret which was the destruction of a sister, the murder of a parent, and the cause of the most perfect infamy to herself ; that secret, which, with all this complicated mischief, was the occasion of no one incident of good, after it had destroy'd the family, extended its accursed influence to their acquaintance.

The opinion of the world is of more value than it seems, and of importance greater than its value. Those who hold it cheap, know not that they trifle away the greatest of all treasures: they know not that virtue itself is but half virtue without it, and they little imagine how far the crime that forfeits it, or but the obstinacy, (for that was all in Zanthé's case,) that forfeits it, may extend its mischief. Tho' with our own breasts it is otherwise, yet, with respect to the world, she is a better woman who is criminal, and keeps up the appearance of innocence, than she who being virtuous suffers (and knows it) the world to think her guilty.

Clarissa was of an age to be address'd; and, peace to pretences and dissimulation, she who is of an age is of an inclination to be courted. Clarissa, though as modest and as reserv'd as ever woman was, yet saw courtship, and the end of courtship marriage, as natural parts in the oeconomy of her future life. She expected she should be address'd; she found herself sollicitated, and she had only to determine on the doing that prudently,

which she had before agreed with herself that it was prudent to do.

Clarissa's fortune was settled, and it was neither great nor inconsiderable ; her disposition was humble, affable, and obliging, and her person very agreeable. We are not to wonder that the handsome and the accomplish'd people are those who furnish the world with adventures ; those who want these advantages, pass thro' it more silently, and with less bustle.

We acquire our opinions as well as our knowledge, from observation. Clarissa, as she imagin'd she should one time or other have some concern with love, had early observed its consequences in her friends ; as she had grown to the age when it was offer'd to her, she had been more and more informed of the manner in which she ought to judge of it ; and it was from the conduct of the lovers of these ladies that she judged of the sincerity of her own. Nothing could have the appearance of a more honourable or more generous courtship on either part, than that of Amoris and Lelius, to these unhappy girls ; and as their fair friend had
judged

judged of the passion of the most favour'd youth who address'd her from the strength of theirs, it is not a wonder that she should form her expectations on the consequences.

With all the favourable prospect, these were in the highest degree terrible, and she who had seen such an event from the most seeming honourable attachment in the world, could not but be in doubt with respect to all others. If there was a man of whom she had early thought better than of all his sex 'twas Amoris; Lelius had appear'd only second to him: and she had look'd upon him as one of the best men on earth, who could with equal steps follow the best in a path where so much difficulty and discouragement opposed. She had seen afterwards this man of all the world, from the generous and honest lover of the charming Zante, become, as she supposed it, her betrayer: she had seen the other, whom she had honour'd for that readiness with which she perceived him copying him in every virtue, as readily following his example in the road of infamy. She had seen the death of a parent the consequence of the

destruction of her children ; and her eyes were open to the effect such a catastrophe, could such have happen'd to her, must have had upon a parent dearer to her heart than all other persons. From what she had seen she was to judge, and this not favourably for her own concerns. She had become too ready to suppose all men false, because she had found those so, whom she the least suspected ; and the event of her own expectations appeared to her as uncertain as it was important.

Clarissa had at this time the fortune to be honour'd with the addresses of a young man of family, heir to a title, and with it to a considerable fortune. She was in herself by no means an equal match for him, but there was a relation, to whom the acquaintance had been owing, who was ready to make up that deficiency. Things could not wear a more favourable aspect,—the mother had introduced the favour'd lover, and to the mother he had been introduced by one who gave this uncommon testimony of his eagerness for the alliance, and of his friendship to the lady. The person and the disposition of the noble youth strongly recom-

recommended him; the generosity of his offer pleaded greatly in his favour; and the sentiments of honour and of virtue, which shew'd themselves in his conversation and in his conduct, were the great stamp of the recommendation. The acquaintance was continu'd; the event was promoted on all parts; and who could have doubted the happiness that it propos'd! Only Clarissa could have doubted it: but Clarissa, who had seen good sense and honour, and every amiable quality the human heart could boast, sacrificed to the basest designs, and who had seen those designs fatally successful in the story of her friends, doubted. From what can we judge, but from experience, and who can blame her doubting?

Clarissa saw in her lover every thing that could command the belief of the most distrustful; she saw great goodness of heart, and superiority of fortune; a passion that had all the marks of reality, and every character of sincerity to recommend it: but she had seen as much before in Amoris, and as much in Lelius. She had seen both these false, and she had

determined that there was no truth in man: she loved the youth who honour'd her with his addressees, and she had not felt that tender passion for any before. Nothing in prudence, nothing in affection could be so much her wish, as that all he told her was the truth; but she was miserable, because she doubted.

The human heart rests not a moment under this painful suspense; nor are there any means that promise relief from the uncertainty, too irrational to recommend themselves. Clarissa had understanding, but love and fear were too powerful for it. Nature allows no way of knowing the hearts of men, but by their words and their immediate actions: these she saw might deceive, and she had recourse to the more than natural, at least to that which the subtle who propose, and the weak who believe them, understand to be more than natural. What Clarissa could not read in the book of observation, she consulted in the book of fate. She had been used, from the effects of a wise education, to laugh at the pretences of the astrologers and conjurors; but fear and necessity make mankind superstitious, as
naturally

naturally as they make them religious. Where there are no means but the worst in our power, we are too strongly tempted to use the worst. There never want, about this town, a set of these pretended conjurors, and it was easy to hear of the most reputed. We look upon these as trifling deluders of the ignorant; but they deserve a much severer censure, and 'tis one of the greatest reproaches of the œconomy of our cities, that they are tolerated.

Al-Hali, the soothsayer of reputation for the present period, has made some little alteration in his name and figure, and is unsuspected amongst his former most intimate acquaintance. Many a giddy woman, with whom he had been intimate under a more human form, thinks he must, indeed, deal with the devil, to have come at the knowledge of his own affairs with her; many a longing creature, who is to meet him out of his sidereal garb in the evening, thinks no inferior power could have inform'd him of his own visit; or could have describ'd, to the most minute particular, every article of that dress which lay,

though she knew it not, in the next room ; or every tittle of that conversation which he intended to hold with her. The adventurer, who as eager to make a fortune as the mad girl to be marry'd, applies, like the bubble in the comedy, for the assistance of a familiar, thinks the stars alone can have inform'd the sage of those cheats, in which himself had been join'd with him ; and the fool of fortune doubts not his learning from the planets, the story of his own borrowing from him the money that he never repaid.

From his former general acquaintance among the dupes of the world, Al-Hali is in the secrets of no inconsiderable part of those who came to him ; and from the appointments, which he makes for himself in his other form, he is as certain of events with respect to some others. To all these he speaks with an assurance greater than any conjuror of old or modern time ; and every article is true. These raise him to the stars, from whence they suppose he borrows all his knowledge, by their applauses. To others he speaks in obscure and ambiguous terms ;

terms ; and, where knowledge is deficient, has recourse to artifice. 'Tis not to be conceived how easily mankind are deceived. Those who have no reason to think so favourably of him, take up the opinion from the others ; and, rather than accuse their own sagacity, suppose he has spoken to them as plainly. He has a set of general terms by rote ; they suit all occasions, and they serve for every body ; that an old person belonging to them will die ; that they will meet with a disappointment ; that some one whom they take to be a friend is false ; and that something, very unexpected, will happen in a little time. These, and a thousand such, are his ready predictions to every customer, and these must be verify'd to every one. The gentleman is a humourist : to some people he will speak very plain, and to others he will not ; to some people he will deliver only these generals, and to others, no one but himself knows why, he will descend to particulars. What is the effect of his knowledge or ignorance, is understood to be that of his fancy ; and for whatever he says he is paid.

The degree of doctor is of his own giving to himself ; and few people would conceive that Al-Hali is but a slight alteration from an honest English name, Hal. Haley. The great wig, the patch'd eye, and the square cap, with this perfectly conceal him from his most intimate friends of former time. To this doctor repairs every fool from fourteen to fourscore. When shall I be marry'd, and when shall I be unmarry'd, are questions ask'd with the same eagerness ; and to the one he answers by a promise of the death of the husband, and to the other by a notice of the arrival of a new gallant. He answers for both with the same degree of positiveness ; but he never fixes the time. All believe, and he pockets the advantage.

To this son of the sun, and brother of the stars, Clarissa was introduced by one of her credulous acquaintance, who was a faithful follower of his councils, an old customer, and a firm friend. Not the most favour'd intimate is to be present at the prediction. The lady, who had done the good-natur'd office, waited
in

in another room, while the grim doctor and his trembling client were in the closet. He was free in his questions, but reserv'd in his answers: he spoke with tenderness; and after a great deal of the general rant of prediction, told her, that the ensuing night, at twelve, the star of her nativity would be in the meridian; and that if she would apply to him the day after, he would tell her things which it was not necessary to mention at the present. They parted; the doctor very well satisfied with his fee; the lady not at all with the jargon she had purchased for it. Her confidant press'd her, keeping the appointment of the next day, and engag'd her honour that she would find it worth her while to come.

The doctor knew he was assur'd of the good offices of her friend. This was one of the decoy ducks of the pond, that had herself the privilege of hearing nonsense gratis, in consideration of her bringing others to pay for it: but caution never thinks itself too sure. It was easy to discover, without the talent of conjuring, that Clarissa was one of those of whom it was possible to make a market. The
conjurer,

conjurer, to make all secure, dispatch'd his faithful female attendant to watch her home; to prepare him for his answers of the next day; and to assure him of her being worthy his attention. This was the star whom the grave doctor consulted mightily on these occasions. The common herd that came and paid their fees were suffer'd to go as they came, satisfied or not satisfied imported nothing. The same faces needed not an offer twice; if every fool in town apply'd once, the succession would last his life: but with these people of apparent importance it was otherwise. The conjurer has always, if he understands his trade, the subordinate occupations of marriage-broker, and of convenience for less lasting engagements. He has his Romeos for every Juliet that can offer, and he knows how to sell his favourable auspices.

The faithful assistant return'd after a moderate stay: she had seen the lady home; she had enquir'd the name of the family; and she had address'd herself to the apprentice of a neighbouring milliner for more intelligence. To know, the way is to pretend to know. The laying
out

out a few shillings in ribbands made way to the acquaintance; and the mention of Clarissa, as one with whom she had the honour of some degree of intimacy, led into the chat of her affairs. The visits of a man of her lover's rank could not be paid in secret; the equipage six hours a day at the door proclaim'd them: and as the affairs of those who are of a condition to keep servants never are unknown, the whole story of his family and estate, of her absolute fortune, and the promis'd addition to it, was told. The information was sufficient, and it had fallen into hands in which no part of it would be lost. Alas! to how small advantages of the interested, do the undersigning and unsuspecting forfeit every valuable offer? How careful ought the innocent to be how they enter into the least acquaintance with the guilty? Those who are ill cannot be the authors of good; but there is no end of their power of mischief.

The information which Al-Hali received from his faithful emissary, his faithful friend, the friend of the unsuspecting Clarissa, came fraught with to him.

him. When he could obtain the necessary knowledge no other way, this was always grasp'd at with eagerness; but here was a deeper game than ordinary, and he knew how to play it to advantage. He determined to impose on even the friend of Clarissa, that he might impose upon her the more powerfully; and he refused to hear a syllable about her. The lady had paid him handsomely: he had been at the pains to calculate her nativity, and he knew none that could discover to him more than the stars, when it was worth his while thoroughly to consult them. He refused to hear the least notice of any thing that concerned Clarissa, and he requested the friendly creature that would have given him the information, to go back to her, that she might not be unjustly suspected of having done it.

He found a beautiful young creature, with six thousand pounds; for that was the absolute fortune of Clarissa, in her own hands, and independent either of mother, or the more distant relation who designed so generously in her favour. He understood this vessel, and this treasure
com-

committed to his care, and he was to consult for how much he could sell the cargo. There are always a set of people ready to take the wife with the fortune; because there are people who, having no home, can live as well in one place as another; and, consequently, while they take the treasure, can leave the incumbrance behind them. To one of these was Clarissa to be sacrificed: Clarissa, the darling of a mother, the favourite of an indulgent aunt, the destin'd wife of a man of quality and virtue, was to be the creature of a villain, and a vagabond's convenience; the prey of an indigent creature little less infamous: and all this was to be sacrificed to an unjust curiosity on her part, and to the advantage of a part of her little fortune on his who laid the scheme. The doctor looked over his list, not of gallants, for this was to answer a better purpose, but of husbands. He fixed upon a fellow of figure in his dress, and one of the few who have not been born to any degree of distinction, yet whose deportment, in some degree, assumes the air of it. There is not any thing so contemptible in men among one another as this
 fort

fort of pride; it procures them neglect, in the place and in the degree of that respect which they demand; but with strangers, especially when those strangers are women, it answers better. The first thing in the world to endear a man with the ladies, is courage; the second is importance; and this last, even when it is assumed without foundation, does not always disgust: they will talk of the insolent and haughty fellow as one whom they do not despise; often with peculiar marks of favour.

Decius, whom the wary Doctor had pitched upon for this exploit, was one of these men of false importance. His father was butler to a lord, and his mother officiated as laundry-maid to her ladyship: the boy had been brought up till twelve years old in the family; and it was there he acquir'd the dignity of deportment which he never after shook off. He thought my lord's behaviour had something in it more noble than that of any other person he had seen; and he did not regard that propriety rendered it graceful. The careful father had intended to breed him under some petty attorney;

torney; and had early put him to learn the necessary methods of writing. He had thought this sufficient, and he had preferred independence, and twelve shillings a week, to the obeying a master, and the prospect of succeeding him in his business. He commenced writer for lawyers, and he formed no higher expectations from that quarter.

There was something laudable in the character of Decius, had it been divested of that impropriety, and perhaps of something worse than impropriety, which attended it; he had industry to support his pride, and he had pride to conceal his industry. He was up with the sun, and he wrote till evening. Cloaths were not necessary at a time when no one saw him; so that putting those, in which he made a figure, on at six in an evening, they lasted four times as long as if he had worn them all day; and they had the great advantage of being seen for the greatest part of the year only by candle-light; a great friend to tarnish'd finery.

Decius was one of those people who are never seen out of embroidery. He had the

the art of buying these guady cloaths at second-hand; and as they cost him only the value of the silver, they were at once the cheapest and the most lasting in the world. For the price that others, in his station, paid to their taylors for the most ordinary suit, Decius purchased the remains of a birth-day covering. His wigs and his linnen, nay, and anecdotes that may be trusted say, the most minute articles of his dress were purchased on the same frugal terms. He dined on a dry roll; he supp'd on a dish of chocolate; and having borrowed the garret of a friend in Queen's-head-alley, he was directed to near the King's-bench-walks, with esquire fixed to his name.

To this errant adventurer, for with all the poverty of Decius, adventure was at the bottom of his designs, and was the inspiring genius of all this finery, the doctor sent on the occasion of his new offered fortune. People of this stamp make short arguments. When the prey is in a man's hands he may demand his own terms; and the modest doctor claim'd only four thousand pounds, for helping the youth to two thousand, as an absolute

lute present, and giving him a fine girl for a month or two into the bargain.

Heaven and earth ! how are the best and worthiest of our species bought and sold, by the meanest and most infamous, without their knowledge ! or how little does the inconsiderate creature, who gives her half crown to know her fortune, imagine that she is delivering up with it her person to the most perfect ruin ! The young Decius had too much prudence to dispute the terms. He knew, if he said no, there were enough who would leap at the offer. The four thousand pounds he looked on as nothing to him at all. He was asked if he would accept of a fine woman for a month, and after that be content to change place with two thousand pounds in his pocket. The answer was easy. He did not hesitate on saying yes. Laws would invalidate all obligations that could be made between such men, and on such occasions ; but there are a set of people whose persons are below, and whose artifices are above the laws : they entered into agreements, and the conjuror gave him his instructions,

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The lady came to her appointment. The doctor had been confined to his bed ever since he saw her, and had ordered no body to be admitted; but for her good ladyship, the prudent gentlewoman who attended believ'd they might venture to disturb him. The devoted Clarissa was desired to sit. The doctor was called, and after a few minutes entered, with great care in his countenance, and with his hands filled with papers. They began to discourse, and the wise astrologer desiring her to inform him of nothing, but to consider her own heart truly, and tell him whether the stars had given him right information as to the past, since then she would be best able to judge as to the future.

He began with her family and her earlier years, which he ran over slightly, as of little importance, and only talked of them in general terms: he came to the present attachment, and he told her, with great earnestness, that the whole happiness of her life depended upon it. 'Not, madam, said he, that any good
' offers

‘ offers itself to you in this, but the
 ‘ avoiding a present and instant danger,
 ‘ with which you are threatened, will
 ‘ give you the means of happiness else-
 ‘ where.’ Clarissa trembled; the doc-
 tor proceeded to describe her lover. He
 was not content with doing this by his
 person, he described his heart: he told
 her of his visits; he repeated his ad-
 dresses. Every man talks to every wo-
 man alike; and knowing what was na-
 tural, he hit on what was true. The
 lady could not doubt some superior in-
 formation in the man who repeated to
 her what no ear but her own had heard.
 Convinced of the truth in this, (alas!
 how easily credulity is convinced!) she
 was prepar’d to believe all the rest.
 The rascal saw he had succeeded, and he
 told her he had but one question to ask,
 on which her whole fate depended.
 The art which he professed, he told her,
 seemed to point it out too plainly to him;
 but her self was better judge. ‘ Is your
 ‘ heart, madam, perfectly engaged to
 ‘ this youth, or is it not? Answer me
 ‘ cautiously, said he; for all depends
 ‘ upon it. I do not ask if it incline to
 ‘ him, I know it does; but is it per-
 ‘ fectly,

‘fectly, and for ever fix’d upon him, de-
‘serving or not deserving? for if it be, I
‘shall speak not a word more to you.
‘By my own art, and by your future
‘happiness, for both are concern’d in it,
‘said he, I do not ask or entreat of you,
‘but I charge you to tell me truly, Is it
‘esteem or love that you feel for him?
‘one of them it is; and they are so nearly
‘allied unto each other, that, to confess
‘the imperfection of my art, ’tis not in
‘astrology to distinguish between them.
‘— You can; continued he, and re-
‘peating the words with a most impor-
‘tant countenance, I again charge you,
‘to do it truly.’

The trembling Clarissa told him, she thought very favourably of her lover: she said her heart was so much unexperienced, that she could not presume to determine whether it was passion or reason that gave him the preheminance he held in her breast over all other men; but that she believed it was because of his truth and generosity. ‘You have answered me truly, reply’d the doctor, and you deserve all the assistance that my art can give you. Have comfort; you

‘ you are safe. You have too much
 ‘ goodness to be forsaken by providence.
 ‘ You are safe, I repeat it ; and I will
 ‘ free you from the danger that at this
 ‘ moment threatens to destroy you. You
 ‘ do not love this noble youth. Noble
 ‘ let me call him, for so the stars say
 ‘ men call him ; but ’tis from chance,
 ‘ not virtue. You esteem him for good
 ‘ qualities which you think he possesses,
 ‘ and you will no longer esteem him
 ‘ when you know he has no title to
 ‘ that thought. You are upon the brink
 ‘ of a precipice, and while all seems
 ‘ smooth before you, the gulph lies open
 ‘ at your feet to swallow you up to be
 ‘ no more heard of.’

The artful creature knew whatever he
 did was to be precipitated ; and the pros-
 pect was fair enough, and the advantage
 considerable enough to make him earnest
 in the scheme. He knew he should
 alarm and terrify her : he saw he had
 done it thoroughly, and he had prepar’d
 his engines which he now put in execu-
 tion. ‘ This night, continued he, ma-
 ‘ dam, is destin’d to your ruin : but
 ‘ there is a way also by which it pro-
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‘ mifes you the moft complete happi-
‘ nefs. ’Tis thus the heavens deal with
‘ mortals : in the fame moment they
‘ offer prosperity and ruin, and leave
‘ them to fix on which they please. The
‘ moment is irrevocable : the refolve you
‘ make determines all your future hap-
‘ piness. Your lover will vifit you at
‘ feven, He will prefs you to Giardini’s
‘ concert ; you have now his tickets, and
‘ I know you are going home to drefs
‘ for it.’ The lady turn’d pale : ſhe
‘ almoft fainted. ’Twas a piece of intel-
‘ ligence he had eafily obtained ; but the
‘ eafy manner in which he introduced the
‘ mention of it, not in the parade of his
‘ aftrology way of proof of his knowledge,
‘ but caſually, and as it were upon the
‘ occaſion, aſtoniſh’d her. She took the
‘ tickets from her pocket, and her con-
‘ fuſion was too great for words. ‘ As
‘ you return, continued he, your chair
‘ will be ſtopp’d in Broad-ftreet, and
‘ you will be hurried into a poſt-chaife :
‘ ’tis now getting ready. Your noble
‘ lover will be your only companion.
‘ By day-light you will be at his feat.—
‘ you have virtue, madam, to reſiſt all his
‘ follicitations ; but your reputation will
‘ be

‘ be lost by the accident ; — he will press
 ‘ you to comply to his base purposes ;
 ‘ for he has no other. Many have been
 ‘ ruin’d under such specious pretences.’

The amazed Clarissa burst into tears ;
 ‘ No more, sir, speak no more.’ — Her
 favourite Zanthé came into her mind,
 and her unhappy sister. The conjuror
 had spoken at random, but she under-
 stood him as referring her to these ; so
 much does imagination help the cheat of
 these deceivers. She gave credit to the
 whole ; and she confess’d, that from this
 fatal experience of the ruin of those whom
 she so entirely loved, she had always had
 her fears, though her best friends were
 blind to the danger. ‘ You are right,
 ‘ sir, I know you are right, concluded
 ‘ she : Who could be more seemingly
 ‘ honest, or more seemingly generous
 ‘ than Amoris ?’ ‘ No man,’ reply’d the
 doctor hastily. ‘ Who than Lelius ?’
 ‘ No man, continued he, except that
 ‘ Amoris.’ Though he knew nothing of
 the story, he join’d her exclamations, and
 they conversed as if familiar with the
 whole event. The conjuror had little
 suspected her knowing a parallel story ;

but he was too wise not to profit of the discovery: he had at first alarm'd her fancy, he now attack'd her reason; and what imagination hinted to her was countenanced by experience.

‘ Sir, What am I to do?’ ‘ Only,’
‘ reply’d he, not to go to this fatal con-
‘ cert.’ ‘ Most certainly I shall not.
‘ But, sir, you told me good fortune
‘ often offer’d itself at the same moment
‘ with the ill; am I so happy as to have
‘ the choice?’ The doctor, rejoiced to
have her remember it, told her she was.
Something he knew offer’d for her; but
he would be secure before he spoke, and
when he did she might depend upon it.
He turn’d over his globes; he scrawl’d
upon the paper; he talk’d of his *al*
Turayia and *Nabash barib*; his *Pleiades*
and his *Crooked Serpent*; his *House of*
Saturn, and his *Mansion of the Moon*. He
employ’d a quarter of an hour in all the
gibberish of astrology; and when that was
over, he catch’d her by the hand, ‘ Ma-
‘ dam, said he, be comforted; the mo-
‘ ment of your intended ruin is also the
‘ moment of your offer’d happiness. At
‘ a quarter after six your noble lover, the
‘ villain

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' villain let me call him, who, under the
 ' pretence of marriage, designs your
 ' ruin, will make his visit: punctually
 ' at that moment also, the man whose
 ' fortune is blended by the stars with
 ' yours, though you have not yet seen
 ' one another, will enter Somerset-gar-
 ' dens: meet him, and may you be
 ' happy. You will know him by his
 ' serious look, not common with per-
 ' sons of his age and rank. He will enter
 ' at the middle walk: I see him turn to
 ' the left; I follow him round the gar-
 ' dens; my eye pursues him to the wall;
 ' he looks over to the river; he gives
 ' somewhat to a decay'd gentlewoman;
 ' and he drops his cane as he goes up
 ' the steps. Now all is over.'

The doctor had pronounced these words
 with a kind of enthusiastic vehemence.
 He pretended to see what he had given
 punctual directions should happen; and
 he now pretended that the vision left
 him. He look'd stedfastly on the coun-
 tenance of Clarissa. He told her, who or
 what this youth was lay beyond his power
 to determine; for the stars would not do
 all things: but upon the faith of his art

he assured her he was worth her knowledge; and press'd her, if any opportunity should offer of his speaking at the happy moment, that she would not lose it. 'But be gone, madam, said he, while we talk the hour is at hand; go, and the heavens that promise you happiness accomplish it.'

The lady took her leave with a liberal present, and all was prepared to continue the delusion. Her companion had attended her to the doctor; but she had not been admitted any more than before. She went away with her, and she took no small pride in the discomposure which she perceived in her countenance. She demanded, with some triumph, whether he was not a surprising man. 'A miracle, reply'd the other; but ask no questions, only bid the coachman stop at Somerset-gardens.' The order was given, and the poor Clarissa was too much discomposed to be able to explain herself. As they went on she only requested her at times to bid the coachman hasten. — Such discomposure never was in an human face, nor so many passions ever were in an human heart at once.

once before. The astrologer had raised her apprehensions and her expectations to the highest pitch; and what she fear'd and what she hoped were both too much for words. They came to a full stop. Clarissa look'd out with great impatience to see what was the occasion. A post-chaise block'd up the way; they were sitting on the wheels and adjusting the several parts of the carriage. The very sight of the machine made her tremble. Alas! how little did she expect what was coming? how little imagine all was prepar'd to deceive her, and to complete the ruin?

As she look'd out, the master of the chaise approach'd to the door of the coach. He spoke with great civility; he begg'd pardon for the obstruction, but they should get it out of the way immediately: it was for a very particular occasion they were preparing it: 'twas to set out at ten from Marlborough-street, and to run forty-eight miles by morning. Clarissa fainted: incapable of suspecting the fraud that had been put upon her: nay, if she had suspected, incapable of conceiving such complicated treachery. She lost her senses at the name of the

N 4

place

place and hour so exactly corresponding with what the conjuror had told her; and more so at the distance they were to go, which was just that of the seat of her lover.

She was recover'd; and they proceeded. They were at Somerset-gardens before six. To a moment, according to the prediction, enter'd Decius. The friend of Clarissa had yet heard nothing of this: they were sitting on a bench to the right, and the eye of Clarissa follow'd the real Decius along the walks, as stedfastly as that of the conjuror had pretended to pursue his figure in the idea. She saw him enter at the appointed door; she saw him turn the appointed way; she saw him look over the wall; she saw him give the money; and she saw him drop his cane upon the steps. He had now enter'd the walk in which they were, and he bow'd to the friend of Clarissa as he pass'd the bench on which they sat; but without particularly looking at them. 'Do you know that gentleman,' says Clarissa eagerly? 'Yes very well, reply'd her friend; I have danced with him often at New Tunbridge.' 'Who is he?' 'He is a student in the Temple. His father
' puts

puts him there just to know law enough to keep his own: but it will not be worth his while to follow it.

Clarissa was satisfied, she begg'd they might meet him; and, if possible, get into conversation. The other told her nothing was so easy; they were very well acquainted, and if he had not been the modestest man in the world he would have spoke to her before; but 'twas only because a stranger was with her. Here was a stroke of fortune beyond the conjuror's or the lover's expectations. Decius saw his prey, and he was prevented all the difficulty of the chase. They met. They talk'd together; and the humility of address, joined with the natural haughtiness of carriage, which the poor Clarissa could distinguish in him, shewed him at once the man of fashion and the lover.

His pride, however little it suited with his abject circumstances, now stood him in good stead: and the sacrifice which it was plain he made of it to the attention with which he address'd himself to Clarissa, was a mark of that great respect

with which he seem'd to have many reasons for treating her. He complimented her understanding; and that to every woman is the highest of all flattery, and is the best received, as well as the easiest paid: he spoke with great admiration of her person, and he did this with a reserve and delicacy that added greatly to the merit of what he said: he often mention'd how fortunate a circumstance he thought it, that he had fallen in the way of seeing her; and he, at length, took courage to beg, that if it were not too great an indulgence, she would permit a stranger, who had no designs in the request, and who admir'd her greatly, to have the honour of sometimes visiting her.

Clarissa told him he did her honour in the mention; and that she did not doubt but the more she heard of him, she should find greater reason to consent to his offer of acquaintance. It was a bold push to begin an intimacy from perfect strangeness; but he had reason enough to urge it, and the lady very little resolution to deny. The third person, who had serv'd their common purposes so happily, now com-

completed the good fortune : she invited Decius to visit her the next evening, and promis'd to use her interest with her fair friend to be there also. People who are in fear know when they have gone far enough. This was the case both with the new lover and the new mistress. Not one of them mentioned a syllable farther on the subject. Half an hour more was pass'd in the gardens, and the gallant Decius, not a bit the forwarder for his success, put them into their coach, and retir'd to make glad the partner of his fortune.

The appearance of Decius, and his deportment, were the subjects of the ladies conversation as they went home. Clarissa found her lover there; and such was the effect of the disorder she had been thrown into by so many attacks upon her imagination, her heart, and her passions, in the preceding hours, that she hardly bore the sight of a man whom she had used to meet with rapture. She pretended illness, nay, indeed, she could not be said to have pretended it. 'Tis a common excuse when a lady is out of humour: but so much perturbation of

N 6

spirits,

spirits, as she had felt for five hours together, left her no cause to counterfeit a disorder. She retir'd to her chamber: she would not be prevail'd with to speak to the man to whom she ow'd many apologies for the disappointment; and the honest concern he express'd at that disappointment; and the true sorrow for the occasion of it, were construed into a confession of all the designs with which he had been charged. He took his leave; and Clarissa requested even her mother not to disturb her.

She had been girl enough; or may it not be fair to say, she had been woman enough to promise herself great satisfaction in the shew and equipage, and title of the wife of him who courted her: but we easily give up what we have deceived ourselves in expecting. She saw all these as airy imaginations, and she saw the design of her destruction, the fate of Zanthé and her sister, as the real fortune that was there provided for her. The contrivances of the artful conjuror, were to her confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ; and all the arguments in the world, had she given opportunities for them,

them,

them, could not have persuaded her out of the least article of her belief. She gave up the imagin'd title and precedence, and she hated the deceiver who had made them the baits to so infamous a design. She contented herself with the expectation of a private gentleman and two thousand pounds a year; for such had the artful Decius, long before, taken care, though with no immediate view, more than to flatter his vanity, to make his affairs appear to the friend of his new mistress; and such she had represented them. The night was spent in thought, and the morning saw her resolution. Her faith in astrology was, at least, as great as her belief in the scriptures; and she doubted nothing of the story that the stars had destin'd Decius for her husband, any more than the account of Decius's fortune.

The lover, for he was truly so, unsuspecting any thing of all that had happen'd, sent early messages to the lady, and as soon as he could make a decent visit in the morning, came. There is a new tenderness, that is the child of pain or uneasiness in those we love: the generous

nerous lover felt all this, and he express'd it all. The mother was in raptures with his honest and earnest passion; but it was otherwise with her to whom it was offer'd. The jaundic'd eye sees every thing yellow: when the mind is poison'd with suspicion every thing favours it. 'Twas thus with Clarissa. That new-born affection, with which he who had a right to her heart pleaded his passion, and he declar'd his pain for her, was construed into an attempt in favour of his defeated purpose. Clarissa was truly virtuous. She was as persuaded, as if it had been so, of the baseness of his intention; and as every thing was now forced into the favour of that design, every thing he said or did gave her disquiet in herself; and the more strongly fix'd that rooted distaste she had taken up against him. He saw it; for lovers have quick sight. He distinguish'd that her disorder was of the mind, not of the body. The suspicion of a lover has but one turn; he guess'd a rival as the occasion; and he guess'd the truth. He resented the indignity done at once to his honour and to his love; and he had reason: he did not think it prudent to declare his suspicion, even

even to the mother, whom he saw as ignorant of the cause, and as concern'd at the event as himself; but he determin'd to be upon his guard; and, in spite of love, to act as he ought.

Here was a new scene on all parts. These people, whose designs had hitherto been the same, and who, of all persons in the world, had been the most the confidants of one another, and the most unanimous, had now their separate thoughts, and separate views. The unfortunate Clarissa to meet a new lover; the noble youth, who had before possessed that title, to watch and to discover this which he so much suspected; and the mother, quite unsuspecting that he had any concealed meaning, to find out the cause of her favourite child's uneasiness.

The lover knew, that to give scope to the occasions of his suspicion, he must be absent. He took his leave early, and he pretended an engagement for the remainder of the day. The unhappy fair one grew easy when he was gone; the afternoon approached; and she devised an

an excuse of absence : the unsuspected do this easily. She escaped to her friend's, and her lover saw her enter : he saw the tawdry Decius follow ; and there was no farther room to doubt. In proportion to the honest excess of his love, was now the violence of his resentment : he determin'd never to think again of the woman who had treated him so meanly ; and he kept his resolution. Great minds are above the little resentments of the vulgar. He never accused the false Clarissa ; but he suffer'd his own character to stand very unfavourably with her mother, rather than hurt the woman whom he had once loved.

The visits of one so much of the family as this generous youth had been, were soon missed. The mother was distracted ; the friends on all parts were uneasy ; only the lady, who might have been expected to feel, and to exclaim the most, was silent. She became confirmed in the opinion of his bad designs, from his dropping the acquaintance when they had miscarried ; for it was impossible for her to suspect that he had watched her ; and she dropp'd hints enough to be

be understood, tho' she disdain'd to explain herself, as to the reason of the change.

We may see, by this instance, how innocence often suffers; nay, how greatness of mind is the very cause of the misunderstanding. The reserve which the lover had kept, with respect to the mother of his mistress, he preserved with regard to all the world. Every one knew he was about to have been married to Clarissa; every one saw the match was broken; and no one heard him declare a reason. The least hints that dropped from Clarissa gained credit from his silence; and she was pitied, who deserved indeed to be pitied; but who would have been condemned, had only what he knew been known: and he was condemned who deserv'd compassion and applause.

The fairest prospect that ever presented, of making a whole family happy by a marriage, was destroyed; and in the place of it, the most perfect destruction was approaching; and this not with any real crime, but from weakness and delusion. What compleated the scene was, that
fatal

fatal secrecy which is the ruin of half the undone among that ill-fortun'd sex ; and the parent of that secrecy, was the severity, from some tincture of which the breast of no parent is free, but which ought to be banished from them all. Had the daughters of the experienced free leave, and fair encouragement, to speak their earlier thoughts in the progress of their passion, that experience would be the security of those upon whom every art takes place, because they are unacquainted with all artifice. Tender, indulgent, and good as the mother of Clarissa was in every other respect, she was not without a tincture of this tyranny. She would have thought the crime unpardonable of receiving the addresses of any man not recommended by herself ; and Clarissa, who knew this, never dared to tell her that she had receiv'd them. She continued to see her lover in private at the apartments of her friend ; and he had so much artifice and so much necessity ; he saw so much at stake ; and he knew so much of that deceit by which it should be secured, that the credulous and unsuspecting prey was no match for the least of his delusions.

lusions. Every meeting gave him a more sure foundation in her affection; and the abhorrence with which she saw the imagined baseness of her former lover, placed the imagined honesty of this in a light of new advantage.

Had Clarissa dar'd to inform her mother of the courtship, she would have had means of knowing who he truly was that offer'd himself to her; but being shut out from confidence, she was shut out from all assistance of counsel, and from all possibility of enquiry. She received from his mouth what it was impossible she should hear from any other; and as she had no opportunities to discover, she had no instigations to suspect the deceit, of those letters which he pretended to receive, from time to time, from his father.

Where there is no suspicion the boldest attempts are secure. Spirited by one success to undertake the next effort, Decius pursued his good fortune till the lady refused more coldly; till she was silent; and, in the end, till she consented. The evening was fixed, and the clergyman attended;

attended: there was no desire on either part to admit any into the secret. The friend of Clarissa was to give her away; and an intimate of the husband's was to be witness to the ceremony. There were many reasons why the astrologer did not chuse to lose sight of his friend upon this occasion: it was a bold venture for him to be present; but he was the necessary witness. His figure was too much altered to leave a suspicion of his being the same man, and he was careful to speak little.

All these attended the lady's coming; but these were not all that attended. The ill treated lover of Clarissa, though he had banish'd all tenderness from his heart, had yet the remains of friendship there. He had suspected from the beginning; he had employ'd agents to make every necessary discovery; and they had succeeded: he had found the lover to be a beggar and a villain; he had discover'd the conjuror to be at the bottom of the design; and though he never appear'd in it himself, he had obtain'd a certain account of every step of the courtship, and of the appointed marriage.

riage. The officers of justice were in readiness, they follow'd the lady upstairs, and they secured all whom they found present, as concern'd in the conspiracy.

Clarissa was preserved from ruin ; but when she knew by what means, must not her remorse have been a distress superior to all she could have suffer'd ? She knew herself unworthy the favour of the man she had wrong'd with so unjust a suspicion, and she never sought to be received into it. The world has lost its soothsayer ; and Clarissa pays for her credulity by a life of repentance.

May the instance plead with all its force in the breast of her sister beauties ! May lessons drawn from the miscarriages, and from the successes of others ; from miscarriages always attendant upon vice ; from successes always the offspring of virtue, stamp on the minds of those, whom inexperience might otherwise betray, an impression of the dignity of goodness, and of the horrors which attend on guilt ; more warm, more lasting, than can be learn'd from the dry lessons

lessons of morality ! May the examples
awake those who would be deaf to pre-
cepts ; and the shadow'd destruction of a
few imaginary characters, prevent the
ruin of a thousand real persons.

Virtue is the guide to happiness: she
who pursues the one cannot miss the
other. The tree will bear its fruit, and
'tis in her own breast to bring it to a full
maturity.

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